

THE *J. Johnson*  
SACRAMENTS

EXPLAIN'D:

IN

Twenty Discourses.

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By *J* ——— *H* ——— C. A-D. S.

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*Exhortamur, ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiamus.*  
2 Cor. vi. 1.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. P. COGNLAN, in Duke-Street, Grosvenor  
Square, M.DCC.LXX.

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Twenty Discourses.

By J. H. C. A. D. S.

Published by J. H. C. A. D. S. in London, 1771.

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MDCCCLXXI.





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T H E  
P R E F A C E  
T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**HIS second Effort of my poor Endeavours, courteous Reader, which I here present you with; these Discourses upon the Sacraments, which I here recommend to your Perusal, and offer for your Instruction and Improvement, both in the Knowledge and Practice of your Christian Duty, cannot, I hope, but meet with as favourable Acceptance, as my former Discourses upon the Decalogue, since they proceed from as ardent a Zeal for your spiritual Welfare. The sole View, and principal Intent of them, is, to dissipate those dark and dismal Clouds, which Indolence, Obstinacy, and Ignorance, has spread over the Christian World. To clear the Paths of Virtue, almost imperceptible, alas! and in a Manner over-run with the Weeds of Corruption, Iniquity and Sin; and that notwithstanding the most strenuous Efforts, vigorous Endeavours, and the most zealous preaching, teaching, and exhorting of our pious Ancestors, worthy and exemplary Labourers in the Vineyard of our Lord. No Pains has been wanting to clear the Track, by rooting them up; to open the Path, by plucking them up; and secure a clear and free Passage, by rooting them out.

But the Artifice and Cunning, the Subtilty and Deceit of the Enemy of Mankind, has been ever such, that by himself, as well as by his indefatigable wicked Instruments; not only by Night, but even at Noon-day; not only in the Dark, but even whilst the Sun darts forth its radiant Light; not in one Field only, not through one Province, one Nation alone, but even whole Christendom, nay the whole Surface of the known and inhabited Globe, he has maliciously interspersed, if not overspread with the Tares of Vice, and almost over-run with the Seeds of Perdition: And that, alas! to so high a Degree, that not only Infidels and Idolaters are swallowed up in Darknes, Jews and Mahometans are absorpt in Error and Superstition; but even amongst those who stile themselves Christians, there are Fools who say in their hearts, There is no God. There are those who cut and carve, stape and mangle, divide and subdivide their Faith, and are so tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, that they scarcely know where to fix the Anchor of their Hope, no more than secure themselves within the Bounds of Charity. Nor is this, alas! the Heretical, Schismatical, or Libertine Christian's Case only; but with an aking Heart, I dread and fear, and with an anxious Mind, I conceive and apprehend, that Stupidity and Ignorance, Folly and Negligence, Sloth and Carelessness have involved too many of those, who make Profession of that Faith, establisbed upon the Rock, who believe in Jesus Christ the Corner Stone, and will not be ranked but amongst his Members of the Catholic Church: And too many, I again fear, of our Catholic Countrymen, are, by their unhappy Dispositions, as well as Circumstances, exposed to a full, and too open a Plain of Vice, and Field of Iniquity, by too frequent conversing with Men, as destitute of Faith as Morality, as profligate in their Lives as Maxims, and as infectious in their Communication and Conversation as an epidemical Distemper, or raging Pestilence in a Country. Not that I would have this taken as a general Reflection, tho' the Terms seem such, but as a Rhetorical Figure, the Whole for Part. Nor is the Case of Eng-  
lish

*I*ish Catholics deplorable upon that Head alone, especially the lower Rank, but moreover the want of more frequent Opportunities of Instruction, by public Exhortations, Catechising, and Preaching, which the Rigour of the Laws renders rare and perilous: tho' Praise be to the Clemency, Goodness, and Lenity of our present Governors and Government, the Execution of them is suspended. Upon this Presumption, exhorted by Charity, and animated by Zeal for the spiritual Improvement, Succour and Relief of my poor Countrymen; I make bold to throw in this my second Mite, merely to inspire them with a Soul-saving Policy, celestial Wisdom, and heavenly Prudence, in order to the procuring, and securing to themselves that eternal Kingdom, that everlasting Crown of Glory whereto all were created, their Right secured and confirmed, through the Incarnation, Merits, Death, and Passion of our dear Redeemer, Jesus Christ, whose Divine Precepts I have expounded in the Decalogue Explain'd.

I here presume to undertake the Exposition of those inexhaustible Fountains of Grace, the Seven Sacraments, as arising and flowing from that Ocean of Mercy expanded upon the Wood of the Cross, where these ineffable Springs being first opened, diffused themselves for the cleansing and purifying, refreshing, strengthening and illuminating our Souls to eternal Life. With Reason then might our sweet Saviour, our Life-giving Physician, remind us with a What could I do more, that I have not done? For he not only humbled himself to Death, even the Death of the Cross; he not only made an Oblation, a Sacrifice of himself upon it once, to atone for our Sins; he not only suffered his precious Body to be torn to pieces with Scourges, his tender Hands and Feet to be pierced with Nails, but even his sacred Side to be opened with a cruel Spear, that not only one Drop, but many; not only Part, but the whole Mass of his Blood, might be spilt to cleanse our polluted Souls, and intirely blot out that Hand-writing which was against us.

He would not only provide general Remedies, but even apply Specificks, to cure most securely and effectually our



*Wounds. He therefore, to repair the Injury done by our first Parents, who by their Disobedience deprived not only themselves, but their whole Posterity, of the State of Innocence and original Justice, instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, to wash off that original Guilt, to enter us into the List of the adopted Children of God, to give us Admittance, through this Gate of Salvation, amongst the Number of the Elect, and renew our Title to the Co-heirship of his heavenly Kingdom, thereby opened unto us. But knowing that that Kingdom suffers Violence, and that our Life upon Earth is a Warfare, he would, by the Sacrament of Confirmation, enlist us under the Banner of the Cross, inroll us in the Number of his Warriors, to fight manfully against our three potent Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; against whose Snares and Temptations, Allurements and Deceits, we are obliged to be continually upon the Watch, continually guarded, and ever under Arms. And as a loving King, and most prudent and provident General, lest we, through these perpetual Toils and Fatigues, should be foil'd, harass'd, defeated, and overcome; he not only frequently harangues his Soldiers, courageously to keep the Field, to push on strenuously, and support the Battle: He not only animates them tenderly, with a Come unto me all you that labour, and I will refresh you; but effectually succours and supports them, feeds and nourishes them with the Bread of Life, the most strengthening, life-giving, and nourishing Food, no less than his own most precious Body and Blood; lest, as the greatest and most efficacious Pledge of his Love, in the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.*

*Nor can this War be carried on without some being mortally wounded, others taken Prisoners, others through Cowardice and Faint-heartedness. Treachery and Desertion, running over to the Enemy. Yet this indulgent, merciful and wise Commander, sends his Physicians and Chirurgions amongst the Wounded, with a most strict Charge to use all possible Care and Diligence, in searching and probing, cleansing and dressing, procuring and applying*

applying, the best and most proper Remedies, for healing and curing their Wounds. He offers no Ransom for Captives and Prisoners, but to set them at Liberty upon their own Conditions: Nor is he less favourable to the Deserters, provided they will truly and faithfully return to their Colours. And for the like End the Sacrament of Penance was instituted, for poor, treacherous, captivated and mortally wounded Sinners; to whom, penitently returning to him, that nothing might be wanting, either to fortify or strengthen them to their last Gasps, or to remove all the Relicks of Sin, the better to dispose them for the Recovery of Health, if the Almighty judge it expedient, or for a happy Passage from Time to Eternity, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was appointed. Moreover that the Hierarchy of the Church might be continued and carried on with Regularity and Subordination, that the faithful might be provided with proper Dispensers of the Ministry of God, Holy Order had the Divine Sanction. Finally, Matrimony, was by the same Divine Institution elevated to the Dignity of a Sacrament, that a People might be procreated and brought up to the Worship and true Religion of God.

I again recommend, Courteous Reader, these Discourses to your attentive and pious Perusal: If you read them thus, with a sincere Intent and Desire of profiting by them, which is the sole Aim with which they were composed: I hope God will give a Blessing both to your and my Endeavours, which I beg of him with all my Heart; humbly beseeching him so to enlighten your Understanding, that you may truly comprehend the Truths therein contain'd, be abundantly replenished with the Graces flowing from these celestial Sources, which may preserve you, in this Life, from the Contagion of mortal Sin, render you most prolifick and fertile in Virtue, and deserving of an eternal Crown of Glory; which is the Ultimate of my Wishes, the Period of my Desires, and the Complement of all my Labours. More I cannot say.



I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the publication of the "Principles of the Christian Religion," and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, however, unable to give you any definite answer at this time, as the matter is still under consideration. I am, nevertheless, very anxious to see the work published, and I am sure that it will be of great service to the cause of Christianity. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
 Your obedient servant,  
 J. W. Alden



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DISCOURSES  
ON THE  
Seven Sacraments.

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DISC. I.

On the SACRAMENTS in General.

*God hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings through  
Christ. Ephes. i. 3.*

OF all the Blessings bestow'd by *Christ* on his sacred Spouse the Church, the most excellent and sublime are the holy Sacraments; which, as *St. Ambrose* says, (*L. 5. De Sac. C. 4.*) 'are most 'wholsome Medicines, instituted by *Christ*, either to 'recover, or preserve the Health of the Soul.' Wherefore,

Amongst all the Points of the Christian Doctrine, there are none more necessary to be well known, than those which regard the Sacraments. Other Mysteries of Faith we are only bound to know in *Specu-*

lation, so as to believe them; but of the Sacraments, we are bound to have a *practical* Knowledge, in order to receive them worthily; that is, with Benefit to our Souls. For, as they are the Means by which we are enabled to perform all Christian Duties, and likewise the precious Means by which the Merits of *Christ's* Passion are apply'd to the Sanctification of our Souls; so it is absolutely necessary for all Persons to be well instructed in them, that those holy Mysteries, being received with Reverence, may heal, and effectually sanctify those who partake of them.

Before I speak of each Sacrament in particular, it will be necessary to say something of them in general. I shall therefore in this Discourse lay before you the Nature, Necessity, Dignity, and Efficacy of the Sacraments, as likewise the Institution and Number of them.

A Sacrament is an outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace, ordained by *Christ* himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof: But more commonly it is defined, *a visible Sign of invisible Grace, instituted by Christ for the Sanctification of our Souls.* In fine, it is agreed on by all, that a Sacrament is a Sign of a sacred Thing. 'We call it a Sign, says St. *Augustin*, (in John, Tract. 80.) because besides the Thing which it lays open to the Senses, it causeth also of itself, that we come to the Knowledge of some other Thing.' For Example, by the Footsteps which we see imprinted on the Earth, we gather that a Man hath pass'd that Way: So a Sacrament is a visible Sign, which declares unto us that which God worketh by its Virtue in our Souls; which cannot be perceived by our Senses. Thus when, in the Sacrament of Baptism, we are washed outwardly with Water, certain Words being used; by this outward Washing is signified, that by the Virtue of the Holy Ghost, all the Spots, and Filth of Sin, are inwardly washed and blotted out, and that the Soul is adorn'd



adorn'd with the noble Gift of Justification. But some one perhaps will ask, Are not Images and Crosses Signs of sacred Things? I answer, They are, but they are not therefore Sacraments; because it is the Nature of a Sacrament, not only to signify some sacred Thing, but also to cause Holiness, or Grace in the Soul. Crosses or Images indeed signify some holy Thing, but they do not contain, or give Grace: but the Sacraments of the new Law do contain in themselves, and give a sacred Thing, viz. the Divine Grace. Wherefore St. Paul says, (Tit. iii. 3.) *He saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renovation of the Holy Ghost.* And St. Augustin thus writeth, (in Psalm lxiii.) 'The Sacraments of the old Law, says he, promised the Saviour; the Sacraments of the new Law give Health and Life; for those did only signify, but these also effect what they signify.' As the Seal of a King doth not only represent, and shew the Image of the King, but also makes and imprints it in the Wax: In like manner the Sacraments in the new Testament, not only signify Grace, but also imprint and work Grace in the Soul of Man.

The Sacraments then are Signs of a sacred Thing, viz. of invisible Grace, which is given in a visible Element. Now the Word *Grace* in the Scriptures, and in the Language of the Faithful, is taken in divers Senses. First, It is taken for all Favours that God does us; other Times for free Gifts of God, term'd Graces, *gratis given*; because they are not given for the Deserts, nor always for the Benefit of the Receiver, but for the Good of the Church, as the Gifts of Prophecy, Preaching, and working Miracles, &c.

*Grace* is not taken in any of these Senses, when we speak of the Sacraments; but it is taken for habitual and sanctifying Grace, which is a most excellent Quality, which sanctifies and renders us holy, and just in the Sight of God; which makes us Chil-



dren of the eternal Father, Brothers and Co-heirs with *Jesus Christ*, living Temples of the Holy Ghost, and *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, says *St. Peter*, (2 Epist. i. 4.) We ought therefore to have the Sacraments in the highest Veneration, since we certainly know that by them we have a Right to the Kingdom of Heaven.

If then we are obliged to have a Reverence and Esteem for the Sacraments, what can we say or think of such impious Wretches, who deride and contemn them, and this because they seem to be abject and mean Things? Our Souls, cry they, have a Loathing of Sacraments so vile and mean: What Force, say they, have Water, Bread, Oil, and other Sacramentals? *Luther* openly taught, That the Sacraments were nothing but divine Testimonies, to stir up and nourish Faith; and that they were only to close up, as with a Seal, the Promises of God. The same Doctrine *Calvin* cried up, saying, 'The Sacraments were nothing else but Seals or Testimonies, to sustain and bear up the Weakness of our Faith, and that by them we testify our Devotion towards God.' But what strange Doctrine is this! For if they be only Seals, or Testimonies, to sustain and bear up the Imbecillity of Faith, why did *Ananias* say to *St. Paul*, (Acts xxii. 16.) *Be baptized, and wash off thy Sins?* Again, why did *St. Luke* write, (Acts ii. 38.) *Do Penance, and let every one of you be baptized, for the Remission of your Sins?* Again, why did *St. Paul* write to *Titus*, (Titus iii. 5.) *He saved us by the washing of Regeneration?* And what doth he mean, when he says, in another Place, (Eph. v. 26.) *Purifying it by the washing of Water in the Word of Life*, but that the Sacraments, through the Merits of *Christ's* Passion, have Force and Power to cleanse a Soul, and to infuse Virtues into it? Moreover, if they only seal up the Promise of God, why do the holy Fathers unanimously affirm, that they give Grace, and infuse Virtues? Hear what *Tertullian* says of the Sacrament



Sacrament of Baptism, (L. de Baptis.) 'The flesh, says he, is washed, that the Soul may be cleansed.' Behold how he affirms, that Baptism was not instituted to stir up Faith, but to purify the Soul, and to infuse Virtues. Again, speaking of the Sacrament of Confirmation, he says, 'The Flesh is anointed, that the Soul may be sanctified; the Flesh is sign'd, that the Soul may be strengthen'd.' And he affirms the same of the Sacrament of Orders: 'The Flesh, says he, is cover'd, or shaded with the Impression of Hands, that the Soul may be illuminated by the Spirit.' By which Words he plainly shews, that the Sacrament of Order is not a naked Sign and Testimony ordained to stir up Faith, but that by the Imposition of Hands, the Soul is illuminated with the Spirit of God. *Tertullian* also affirms the same of the Sacrament of the holy Eucharist, in these Words, 'The Flesh is clothed with the Body and Blood of Christ, that the Soul may be filled with God.' What can be spoken more plainly? And in the same Place he proves, that our Bodies shall rise again, because the Sacraments are applied to the Bodies, that their Effects might pass to the Soul. Moreover, if the Sacraments of the new Law are only mere Signs of God's Promise, why did *St. Augustin* thus write? (in Psalm lxxiii.) 'The Sacraments of the new Law, says he, give Health and Salvation; the Sacraments of the old Law promised the Saviour.' The Sacraments are now changed, they are made more easy, are fewer in Number, and more wholesome. This, dear Christians, is the Doctrine of the holy Fathers, of the Efficacy of the Sacraments; who all of them affirm, that the Sacraments were not instituted only to stir up Faith, but that they are lively Instruments, which give Grace to the Soul of Man.

But perhaps, some will say, or think with themselves, if the Sacraments have so great Force, as to blot out Sins, and infuse Grace, why do such Num-

bers in the Church lie maimed with so many Wounds of Sin? To which I answer, What will Medicines, tho' never so efficacious, avail the Sick or Wounded, if they will not make use of them? For if any one desires to be cured, he must go to the Physician, ask his Advice, and follow it by taking the Medicines which he prescribes. In like Manner, if we desire to be cured, as to our Souls, we must have Recourse to the heavenly Physician, and frequent the Sacraments, which he has instituted for the Cure of our Souls; for by this Means, we may receive the Cure of our Wounds, the Pardon of our Sins, and the Grace of the Holy Ghost.

But some one perhaps will say, the Passion of *Christ* was sufficient to blot out, or cancel the Sins of the whole World; what Need is there then of the Sacraments? for it seems thereby, that an Injury is done to *Christ*, as if his Passion and Merits were not sufficient for the Redemption of the World.

To this I answer, That the Passion of *Christ* was abounding, and sufficient to blot out all the Sins of the World; but *Christ's* Passion ought to be apply'd to us by the Sacraments, to which God has so annexed justifying Grace, that ordinarily he hath not decreed to give, and confer it on us, but by the Use of them. Now, for Example, if there was in a City a great Well, whose Waters were most wholesome for the Health of Bodies, and were sufficient to quench the Thirst of all the Citizens, what would that Well and Waters profit, if no Man would draw the Water out of the Well? In like Manner, the Merits of *Christ* profit not if they be not applied. You see therefore, it is most necessary to make use of the Sacraments, by which God applies to us his Merits, and by which, as Instruments, he confers his Grace upon us. And altho' St. *Paul* says, (Rom. i. 17.) *The just Man lives by Faith*; yet he does not say, the just Man lives by Faith alone: Therefore  
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to the Sacraments is likewise left their Force and Virtue; for otherwise the Merits of *Christ* would be excluded. We confess, that Faith is much commended in the Scripture, but it does not follow from thence, that Faith *alone* worketh Salvation, and not the Sacraments; because as a Physician liveth by the Knowledge of Medicines, it followeth not therefore, that Knowledge alone is sufficient to cure the Sick, for besides the Knowledge of Medicines, the Medicines themselves are necessary to drive away the Disease. So the just Man liveth by Faith, but not by Faith *alone*; because he ought also to make use of the Sacraments, which are able to cure him of the Disease of Sin.

The Sacraments, as I said before, were instituted by *Christ* our Lord, for the Sanctification of our Souls; yet none of them can be validly given, unless the same *Matter* and *Form*, [which *Christ* appointed, be applied, and with the *Intention*, and by the Ministry of such, as *Christ* has ordained to administer them; because none but God is able to give Power to any corporal Thing to confer Grace. *All the Sacraments*, says the Council of *Florence*, (In dec. Eld.) *are perfected by three Things, viz.* ‘By Things  
‘ as the *Matter*, by Words as the *Form*, and by the  
‘ Person administering the Sacraments, with *Inten-*  
‘ *tion of doing what the Church does:* Whereof if any  
‘ one be wanting, the Sacrament is null and of no  
‘ Effect.’

Again, our Saviour *Christ* instituted the Sacraments for divers Causes, whereof the *first* is, that so he might accommodate himself to our Imbecillity and Weakness; for so it is provided by Nature, that those Things which we cannot comprehend in Mind and Understanding, we come to the Knowledge of them by such Things as are perceived by Sense; which St. *Paul*, full of heavenly Wisdom, teacheth us, saying (Rom. i. 20.) *The invisible Perfections of God are understood from the Creation of the World, and*  
*seen*



seen from the Things that are made. Wherefore *Christ* did most wisely, in shewing (through his Goodness and Mercy to us) the hidden Virtues of the Sacraments, by sensible Signs; for this was agreeable to human Nature, which is composed of a Body and Soul. For as St. *Chrysostom* excellently says, (Hom. 83. in Mat.) ‘If thou wert incorporeal, that is, without a Body, God would have given to thee naked and incorporeal Gifts; but because thou hast a Spirit added to thy Body, spiritual Gifts are delivered to thee in corporeal Things.’

A second Cause is, that it might more easily appear, that the Grace which is conferred by the Sacraments, is from God alone; for if it were given by any spiritual Thing, Men might have expected, that they were to be sanctified by the proper Virtue of that Thing: But now, since that so excellent a Gift is conferred upon us by abject and mean Things, no Place is left for such Suspicion: Wherefore *Christ* gave Light to the blind Man with Spittle and Dirt, and not with some precious Ointment, lest the Virtue should be attributed to the Ointment.

A third Cause, why this Institution of the Sacraments was most necessary, is, says St. *Ambrose*, (L. 5. de Sacr. C. 4.) ‘That they might be as Remedies for the Soul’s Health, and ready at Hand, either to recover or preserve it.’ For that Virtue, which flows from the Passion of *Christ*, that is to say, the Grace which he merited for us on the Altar of the Cross, must come to us by the Sacraments, as a Conduit.

A fourth Cause is, that they might be Marks and Signs, by which the Faithful might be known, or distinguished from Infidels; for as Captains, in time of War, give to their Soldiers a private Sign or Token, that they may the more easily know one another, so the Sacraments distinguish the Faithful from Infidels.

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The *last* Reason is, that by them Christians might be exercised in Humility; for it was just, that he who was created by God to rule over all Things, being now fallen from his Dignity, should be compelled to humble himself, for the Recovery of the Grace of God, and to seek his Salvation from him, by Creatures far inferior to himself.

But now, as to the Minister of the Sacraments: It is not an Angel, or any of the People, but only those, who are ordained to this Purpose, as are Bishops and Priests. *None*, says St. Paul (Epist. ad Heb.) *ought to assume to themselves this Honour, but who are call'd to it, as Aaron.* But it is to be observed, that the Sacraments do not depend on the Dignity and Merits of the Ministers of them, but on the Excellency and Merits of *Christ*; for the Ministers are only Embassadors, or Deputies of *Christ*; for whatever they act, they do in the Name of *Christ*. Wherefore, as St. *Augustin* says, (Contra Donat. L. 1. C. 4.) ‘They are not more true, and more holy Sacraments, because they are administered by one that is better, but they of themselves are true and holy; for as, says he, it makes no matter, as to the Efficacy of the Seed and Plantation, whether or no that be done with clean or foul Hands, so that the Seed be good, and the Earth fruitful.’ In like Manner, it matters not whether the Sacraments be administered by a wicked and vile Minister, or by one who is pious and good, provided that he faithfully perform his Office. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* hath this excellent Saying, (In Orat. in S. Bap.) ‘An Iron Seal, says he, doth as well express the Image of the King, as a Silver or Gold one; so the Grace of God is as well imprinted by the Sacraments in the Soul of Man, by an Iron Minister, as by a Gold one.’ Wherefore St. *Chrysostom* justly observes, (Hom. 8.) ‘That the Grace of a Sacrament is not hurt by the Wickedness of the Priest.’

Now,



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Now, dear Christians, as to the Number of the Sacraments; if you attend to what the Scripture asserts, you will find that there are Seven Sacraments.

*First*, We read in St. *Mark* of the Sacrament of Baptism, where he says, (C. xvi. 16.) *He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.*

*Secondly*, Of Confirmation, in the *Acts* of the Apostles, where St. *Luke* says, (C. viii. 18.) *That by the Imposition of Hands, by the Apostles, was given the Holy Ghost.*

*Thirdly*, Of the Sacrament of Penance, St. *John* makes mention, (C. xx. 23.) saying, *Whose Sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.*

*Fourthly*, That the Eucharist is a Sacrament, the same Evangelist witnesseth, (C. vi. 54, 55.) saying, *Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have Life in you: He that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood hath Life everlasting.*

*Fifthly*, Of Extreme Unction, St. *James* teacheth, (C. v. 14. 15.) saying, *If any one be sick amongst you, let him call in the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil, and the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick Man, and if he be in Sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

*Sixthly*, Of the Sacrament of Orders, St. *Paul* speaks, (2 Tim. i. 6.) *I admonish thee, that thou stir up the Grace of God which is in thee by the Imposition of my Hands.*

*Seventhly*, Of the Sacrament of Matrimony the same Saint makes mention, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, (C. v. 32.) *This Sacrament is great, in Christ, and in the Church.*

And St. *Thomas* proves this Number of seven Sacraments by divers Congruities. (3. Part. Q. 63. Art. 1.) For as there are many Diseases and Defects in the Soul, so of Necessity there must be several Sacraments, which may bring Remedies to it. For as a human Body first is born, then it increaseth

and is nourished, and often falls into a Disease; so in the Soul, Changes of this Sort are made. First, Men are born to a new Life; for this the Sacrament of *Baptism* availeth, whereby we are born again to *Christ*: Afterwards *Confirmation* is added; by whose Virtue it comes to pass, that we are increased, and strengthened in divine Grace. In the *Eucharist*, our Souls are nourished with heavenly Food; for of it our Saviour says, (John vi. 56.) *My Flesh is truly Meat, and My Blood is truly Drink*. *Penance* followeth, by whose Virtue lost Health is restored, after we have received the Wounds of Sin. After this *Extreme Unction*, whereby the Relicts of Sin are taken away, and the Virtues of the Mind are refreshed; wherefore St. *James* says, (C. v. 15.) *If he be in Sins, they shall be forgiven him*. *Holy Order* follows, whereby Power is given, to exercise in the Church the Publick Ministry of the Sacraments, and to perform all sacred Functions. Lastly *Matrimony* is added, that by a lawful and holy Conjunction of Male and Female, Children may be brought forth, and religiously bred up to the Worship of God.

Having thus laid before you the Nature, Necessity, Excellency, and Effects of the Sacraments in general, as also by whom they were instituted, and the Number of them; it therefore only remains, that I exhort you with St. *Paul*, (2 Cor. vi.) not to receive the Grace of God in vain.

Consider what an Injury and Affront you offer to God, when you receive the Sacraments unworthily; there is no Irreverence in the World so great, as is the unworthy Receiving of any Sacrament. *Christ* standeth with the Chalice of his Passion, ready to pour it on your Souls, to wash away your Sins; and you profane that Chalice, when you profane any Sacrament, by receiving it unworthily; you then wilfully tread under Foot the precious Blood of *Christ*. The Son of God has provided, in the Sacraments,

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craments, a Remedy for your weak and dying Souls; and instead of applying it, you abuse it. This, dear Christians, is a Sin which hardens the Heart against God; and for those who are guilty of this Sin, if they continue any Time in it, it is with great Difficulty, and must be by a Special Grace of God, if ever they come to true Repentance. I shall speak more of this in the Sacraments of the holy Eucharist and Penance, which wicked Christians sometimes abuse to their own Damnation.

Again, consider what a Prejudice you do to yourselves, when you neglect to make use of the Sacraments; for by that Means you deprive yourselves of innumerable Graces, which God would oblige himself to give you in the rest of your Life: This will render you extremely culpable in the Sight of God, and you will die with Regret, seeing you had such sovereign Remedies and Helps offered you, and that you neglected to make use of them. Know and remember, dear Christians, that the Sacraments are Talents of inestimable Value, given us, with an Obligation to profit by them. We read in St. *Matthew*, (C. xxv.) of a Lord, who was going into a foreign Country, gave such and such Talents to his Servants, in order to improve them; and at his Return, called them to an Account; but finding that he who had received but one Talent, had not gain'd by it, *Cast*, says he, *the unprofitable Servant into exterior Darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*

Now, if the unprofitable Servant was so severely punished, for not improving his Talent, what think you would the Lord have done to him, if he had lost his Talent? And what will *Jesus* say to us, at the great accounting Day, what will he do to us, if we shall have abused, or not used, and profited in Virtue by the Sacraments, which are as so many Talents bestowed upon us? What Weeping, what Regret, what gnashing of Teeth, and what Rage  
against

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against ourselves, for having lost so valuable, such easy, and so frequent Opportunities of securing our Salvation, of advancing in Virtue, and enriching ourselves for Eternity? But on the contrary, the good and virtuous Christians, who have made a proper use of the Sacraments, will then rejoice; they will admire their own Happiness, and will acknowledge their Wisdom, in receiving them often; because they will then see, that the Sacraments were most rich Talents, and infallible Promises, of the inestimable and infinite Glory which they shall possess for ever.

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D I S C. I.

*On the SACRAMENT of BAPTISM.*

*Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*  
Matth. xxviii. 19.

**I**N the foregoing Discourse, I laid before you the Nature, Necessity, and Efficacy of the Sacraments in general. It is therefore necessary I should say something of each of them in particular; and first of the Sacrament of Baptism, as being call'd the Door or Gate of all the other Sacraments; because it is the Entrance to them: For until we are baptized, we are not Christians, and without Baptism we cannot receive any of the other Sacraments. The Subject then of this Discourse shall be on the Necessity and Efficacy of Baptism.

If we look over the holy Scripture, we shall find that none can come to the Kingdom of Heaven without Baptism; which our blessed Saviour by the Words above-mentioned out of St. *Matthew*, declares to be true, and by which Words he commanded his Apostles to teach and baptize all Men: Go, says he, throughout the whole World, and purge it from



#### 14 *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* Disc. I.

from all Idolatry, and sow good Seed in the Field of the World; go where-ever you can, that you may spread my Gospel; *teach all Nations*, says he, not what *Aristotle* or *Plato* taught, for their Knowledge is only Folly before my Father; but teach you the Cross and my Death, my Miracles, and set forth my Life, to be imitated by all; preach to the World, how I descended from Heaven, and put on human Nature, what I suffered therein, how I was put to Death, and redeemed the World with my Blood, how I rose again from the Dead, ascended into Heaven; and how I am at last to come to judge the Living and the Dead; *baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. As if he would say, O my Apostles! it is not sufficient only to preach my Death, 'tis not sufficient only to believe in me, but you must, besides, baptize all Men who will be saved; (Ephes. ii. 3.) *For all are by Nature the Children of Wrath*, says St. Paul, for the Sin of *Adam* cleaves fast to human Nature, for which all Men have deserved eternal Damnation, and from which they cannot be freed, unless they are born again by Baptism. Wherefore St. John says, (C. iii. 5.) *Unless a Man be born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Whence you may see, that no Man without Baptism can be saved; for as heretofore the Brazen Serpent was the only Remedy against the Bite of the Fiery Serpents, so the only Remedy against the Wound of Original Sin, is Baptism.

But lest any one should think, that this Law only belongs to those who are already grown up, and not to Infants, since Christ said to his Apostles, *Go teach, &c.* therefore in another Place he says in express Words, that no Person whosoever is excepted from the Law of Baptism, (John. iii. 5.) *Unless a Man be born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*: As if he would say, O *Nicodemus*! thou tellest me, that it is impossible  
for



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for a Man to be born again, faying, How can an old Man, fuch as I am, be born again, muft he go into his Mother's Womb again to be re-born? Chrift therefore thus answers him: I fpeak not, O *Nicodemus*! of a Corporeal Nativity, whereby a Man muft come again from his Mother's Womb, for this cannot be done: I fpeak then of a Spiritual Nativity, whereby a Man is born again of Water in Baptifm and the Holy Ghoft, unlefs then a Man be re-born, by this Nativity which is made by Water and the Holy Ghoft; he cannot enter into the Kingdom of the *Meffias*, which is the Church, nor obtain eternal Life; for this is that Regeneration of which St. *John* fays, (Chap. i. 13.) *who are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flefh, but who are born of God.* This Regeneration is in fome fome fort like unto the Generation of the natural Son of God, in the Womb of his Mother; for as in the Womb of the Bleffed Virgin *Mary*, Chrift was conceived by the Holy Ghoft, fo we are conceived as it were in the Font, and and are re-born of the fame Spirit. But fome perhaps will fay, if Baptifm be fo neceffary, that no man without it can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, fhall a man then, who is grown up to full Age, and cannot have Baptifm, tho' he defires it, and is forrowful for his fins, be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven? To which I answer, that if with *Contrition*, that is, with a true and fincere Sorrow for his Sins, he hath not actually received Baptifm, and yet really defires it, then he may be faved; for fo the Words of *Chrift* ought to be underftood, where he fays, (John iii. 5.) *Unlefs a Man be born again of Water and the Holy Ghoft:* In like Manner he fhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, who for *Chrift's* Sake fuffers Death, altho' he be not baptized; becaufe Martyrdom has the Force of Baptifm; for our Saviour affures us, (Mat. x. 23.) that *every one who fhall confefs him before Men, he will alfo confefs him before his Father who is in Heaven.*

Now

## 16 *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* Disc. I.

Now, dear Christians, since no one can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, without actual Baptism, or having it in Desire, or being baptized in his own Blood by Martyrdom: You cannot therefore but see, how necessary it is for all Persons, especially married Women, to learn, and know well, all that is necessary and essential to the Validity of this Sacrament: They ought likewise to take great Care, that their Children and Servants know well how to baptize a Child, in case of Necessity, in order that the Infant may not be lost for Want of Baptism.

Observe now what you must do, in order to baptize a Child, or any Person: You must take Water, not Rose-water, or any other made by Art, but natural Water, that is to say, Water of the Fountain, Well, River, Pit, Pond, Sea, or Rain; you must wet, or wash the Body of the Infant with it, by pouring it upon the Head, if you possibly can; and if you cannot wash the Head, you must put Water upon the Breast, Arm, Foot, or upon some other naked Part; and 'tis to be observed, that the same Person who pours the Water, must, whilst he is pouring it on the Child, say distinctly (having an Intention at the same Time to do what the Church does) these Words; 'I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' But in case the Infant should be baptized upon any other Part than the Head, when the Head appears, you must baptize the Child again, under Condition, saying, 'If thou art not baptized, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Because, as *St. Thomas* says, (3 Part. Q. 66. Art 7.) 'Baptism which is given upon any other Part is not certain.' And when you are not certain that the Child is dead, you ought to baptize it under Condition, saying, 'If thou art living, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' For it is better to put yourself in Danger of baptizing a dead Child,

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Child, than not to baptize one living; and because the Life of these little Creatures is sometimes so feeble and imperceptible, that we think them wholly dead, when some Time after they will give Signs of Life, 'tis therefore necessary, that all Persons and especially Women, should know all this: For sometimes it happens, that a Woman falls into Labour suddenly, and unexpectedly, and that the Infant cannot be brought into the World alive; or if it be, it is so weak, that in all Appearance, it will die before an ordinary Minister of this Sacrament can be had; and if those about her know not how to baptize, the Infant, for Want of this, may be depriv'd of Salvation; and so important is the Salvation of a Soul, that every one should learn with great Care how to administer this Sacrament.

In fine, the applying of this Sacrament is of so great Importance, that it is the Duty of every one to know well the *Matter* and *Form* of this Sacrament. The *Matter*, as I said before, is true and natural Water. God, says St. Paul, (1 Cor. i. 27.) *has chosen the weak Things of this World, to confound the Things that are strong*; so God has chosen an inferior, or weak Element, viz. Water, to confound the strongest Sin. For as Water washeth Bodies, so Baptism washeth Souls: Again, as Water washeth away Filth, so Baptism washeth away the Blemishes of Sins.

The *Form* is this. 'I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' There are divers Reasons, why *Christ* would have the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity named in the *Form* of Baptism: But the chief are, in order to declare whence Baptism has its Virtue or Force. viz. from the *Father*, who sent his Son, that he might die for Men; and from the *Son*, who instituted Baptism, and by his Blood gave it Force and Virtue to blot out Sins; and from the *Holy Ghost*, who should inwardly purge and sanctify Souls: And again, because the Blessed Tri-  
nity



## 18 On the Sacrament of Baptism. Disc. I.

nity is the principal Object of our Faith; wherefore Man doth make his first Profession in this Sacrament, to be thereby received into the Body of the Church. So that to baptize a Person *in the Name of God, in the Name of Christ, or in the Name of the Trinity* only, is not valid; because it does not express the Mystery, or three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Every one ought therefore to take great Care, that they do not violate the *Form* of Baptism in the Administration thereof.

As to the Effect of this Sacrament, there have been divers Errors concerning it. Formerly the *Origenists* held, that Sins were not taken away by Baptism, but only covered: The same Doctrine the *Lutherans* teach now in our Age, who affirm, that Sins are not truly taken away by Baptism. But this Doctrine is evidently false; for if Sins are not truly taken away by Baptism, how can that of the Prophet *Ezekiel* be true, saying, (C. xxxvi. 25.) *I will pour out upon you clean Water, and you shall be cleans'd from all your Contaminations, or Filth of Sin?* And why does St. Paul say to *Titus*, (C. iii. 5.) *He saved us by the washing of Regeneration and Renovation of the Holy Ghost?* Therefore the proper and particular Effect of Baptism, is, to make him, who receives it, a Member of the Body of *Christ*, as being admitted into his Church by it, and to dispose and prepare him for the rest of the Sacraments; for no other Sacrament can be received, till we have first been baptized. The general Effect of Baptism, which it hath in common with all the Sacraments, is to give Grace for the Sanctification of Souls; and this it doth after so full and plentiful a Manner, that it remitteth all Sin whatsoever, *Original* and *Actual*, great and little, and forgiveth all Punishment due to it in the next World. *We are buried*, says St. Paul, (Rom. vi.) *together with Christ by Baptism unto Death.* That is, to the Death and Destruction of Sin, and of all Punishment after it. We have, dear Christians, a Fi-  
gure



## Disc. I. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 19

gure of this in *Naaman* the leprous Prince of *Syria*, who washing himself in the Waters of *Jordan*, as the Prophet had prescribed him to do, he came forth so clean, and perfectly cured, that the Scripture says, (2 Reg. v. 14.) *His Flesh was restored as the Flesh of a little Child.*

The Apostles have declared the Effect of Baptism, by divers Types or Figures of the old Testament. *St. Peter* (1 Ep. iii. 21.) applies the miraculous Salvation of Mankind by Water in the Days of *Noah*, as a Figure of our Salvation by the Water of Baptism; *St. Paul*, (1 Cor. x. 2.) delivers the Passage of the *Israelites* through the Sea to the Land of Promise, as a Figure of our passing the Waters of Baptism to our desired Rest in Glory. Thus would God honour Baptism with these great Figures, and inspire the Apostles to take Notice of them.

The holy Fathers, from Time to Time, have spoken wonderful Things of the Efficacy of this Sacrament; for they teach, that various and manifold Graces are conferr'd on us by it. Wherefore *St. Paul* says to *Titus*, (C. iii.) *He saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renovation of the Holy Ghost.* We were born the Slaves of Sin, we are re-born Children of Justice; we were born Sons of the Devil, and Children of Hell, we are re-born Sons of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Truth of this all the holy Fathers witness; 'The Flesh, says *Tertullian*, (De Bap. C. xvii.) 'is washed, that the Soul may be spotless.' *St. Ambrose* (in C. i. ad Rom.) says much the same. And *St. Cyprian* says, (Ep. lxiv. ad Fidum.) 'That 'Infants are to be baptized, that they may receive 'Remission of Sin.' The like doth *St. Hierom* teach in his Epistle to *Oceanus*, saying, (Ep. lxxxv. ante medium.) 'All Sins are remitted to us in Baptism.' Whence he calls Baptism a Deluge or Flood, saying, 'Wonderful heretofore was the Deluge of 'Waters, design'd for the Punishment, or Revenge

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‘ of Sin ; but another more wonderful Deluge of  
 ‘ the Divine Mercy was sent on Earth when Baptism  
 ‘ was given to Men, wherein all Sins, and Punish-  
 ‘ ments due to them were blotted out.’ Let us  
 give ear to what St. *Augustin* says upon the same  
 Subject. ‘ How comes, says he, (L. vi. cont. Ju-  
 ‘ lian) so great Virtue to be in Water, as to touch  
 ‘ the Body, and to cleanse the Soul.” By which  
 Words he plainly shews, that Baptism does not only  
 cover, or hide Sins, but truly cleanseth the Soul from  
 Sins. But he speaks still more plain, in his Book  
 which he wrote of the Baptism of Infants.

Those who want Faith, as *Heathens, Turks, &c.*  
 ask, what Force or Virtue the Water of Baptism  
 hath ? I answer with all the Holy Fathers, and Doc-  
 tors of the Church, it cleanseth the Soul ; but not  
 by its own natural Force and Efficacy, but by the  
 Divine Power. For as the Water which was in the  
 Pond call’d *Probatice*, did not cure of itself, but  
 only when it was stirr’d, or moved by an Angel ;  
 so likewise in-us, the Water of itself does not work  
 or operate, but when it receives the Grace or Vir-  
 tue of the Spirit.

The first Favour, or Benefit conferr’d on us by  
 Baptism, is the blotting out of all Sins, and a Spi-  
 ritual Generation, whereby being made just, we be-  
 come Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The second Favour, or Benefit given us by Bap-  
 tism, is, that it makes a Soul beautiful, and beloved  
 of God : Wherefore St. *Cyril* says, (*Cyril Hieros.*  
*Catech. 2 & 3 C.*) “ Being dead in thy Sins thou  
 ‘ descendest, and ascendest again, being raised to Life  
 ‘ in Justice by Baptism.”

The third Favour, or Benefit which is conferr’d  
 by Baptism, is, that it opens to us the Kingdom of  
 Heaven.

Since then so great are the Benefits we receive by  
 Baptism, all Men ought to be watchful, that they  
 lose not again by Sin, the Grace they have received  
 in

## Disc. I. *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* 21

in Baptism, lest worse Things befall them; for to all re-born or baptized is said, that which *Christ* said to the Man sick of the Palsy, at the Probatical Pond, where having cured him, he said, (John v. 14.) *Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest worse Things happen to thee:* Thou art washed clean, defile thyself no more with Filth; thou hast escaped the Slavery of thy Enemies, submit thyself no more to their heavy Yoke; thou hast driven the Devil out of thy Soul, being expell'd, call him not back again. The Baptized promiseth to renounce the Devil: Now he who renounceth Satan, renounceth also his Works. What the Baptized ought to do, *Christ* himself declares, when he said to his Disciples, (Matth. xxviii. 20.) *Baptize all Nations, teach them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.* Therefore Baptism alone is not sufficient, for the Observation of God's Commands are likewise necessary; according to that of St. *Augustin*, 'the Life of a Christian must be agreeable to Baptism.' The Husbandman watereth his Trees, to the End they may bear Fruit, but the barren Trees he casts into the Fire; in like Manner God watereth Man with the saving Waters of Baptism, to the End that he produce the Fruit of Good Works; but if he will not produce them, he delivers him up, being void of Fruit, to the Flames of Hell. 'Trees, says St. *Chrysostom*, (Hom. xxi) that are well planted, if they make no Return of Fruit for the Labour spent about them, they are deliver'd up to the Fire; the same in some sort, says he, may be said of those who are baptized, if they bring forth no Fruit.'

You are, dear Christians, dead to Sin in Baptism; beware then that you never live to it again: You have put off the old Man; never put it on again. Remember, that Sins committed after Baptism are far greater, more enormous and unworthy of Pardon, than the Sins of Infidels; for by Baptism you have received the Grace of God, and the Gifts of

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the Holy Ghost; if then you sin, notwithstanding these Favours, you have much less Excuse than a *Turk, Jew, or Pagan*. If you have as yet preserved your baptismal Robe of Innocence, walk in it till Death; for 'tis more honourable, more pleasant, more easy, and more secure to go by the Way of Innocence, than by the Way of Penance, to everlasting Life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

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D I S C. II.

*On the SACRAMENT of BAPTISM.*

*Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matth. xxviii. 19.*

THERE is nothing, dear Christians, can excite you to a more lively Acknowledgment of *Christ's Favours* to you, than to think seriously and read frequently upon the Graces he has conferr'd upon you, by making you Children of God, and Members of the Church by Baptism. In the last Discourse, I laid before you the Necessity and Efficacy of Baptism; my Design in this is to explain to you the Ceremonies used therein, as also to shew you the Excellency of this Sacrament.

The Ceremonies which are used in Baptism, are as so many Lessons, informing us of the Effects of Grace obtained by this Sacrament; as also to shew us, what the Obligations are, which we contract by the Sacrament of Baptism.

First then, the Water which is used in Baptism, is solemnly consecrated twice in the Year, *viz.* in the Vigils of *Easter* and *Pentecost*, and that for this Reason; that Christians might understand or know that the Virtue and Effect of Baptism proceeds from



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from the Death and Passion of *Christ*; and that Baptism cleanseth us from Sins, and makes us Favourites of Heaven; but not by the natural Virtue of Water, but by the Virtue of the Merits of *Christ*; for to that End are directed the Prayers of the Church, which she uses in the Consecration of Water, where she beseeches God, that he would vouchsafe to sanctify this Water, for *Christ* our Lord's Sake, by the Virtue of the Holy Ghost; and that all the Children of *Adam*, who shall receive the sacred Baptism of *Christ*, may be freed from their Sins. Wherefore St. *Cyprian* says, (Epist. lxx.) 'That the Water ought first to be consecrated and sanctified by the Priest.' And St. *Basil* thus writeth, 'We consecrate,' says he, (De Spirit. Sanct. C. xvii.) 'the Water of Baptism, and the Oil of Unction.'

The Font being consecrated, the Child is brought to the Church Door, but must not enter; to signify to us, that we must first lay down our Burden of Sin, if we will enter into the House of our Lord. Then the Minister of the Church pronounces the Exorcisms; he rebukes the wicked Spirit, and commands him, by certain Prayers, to depart, and give Place to the coming of the Holy Ghost. St. *Ambrose* makes mention of this Ceremony above 1300 Years ago; 'When a Priest,' says he, (De iis qui initientur.) goes to baptize a Person, he first begins with Exorcisms.'

Afterwards he breathes on the Child; by which is signified the Breath of the good Spirit which Men receive when the wicked Spirit goes out. And this Custom St *Cyril* (Hierus. Catech. 8.) mentions upwards of thirteen hundred Years ago. No one ought therefore to laugh at it, lest he be contemned and scorn'd by *Christ*, who used the like when he gave the Holy Spirit to his Disciples; for as St. *John* says, (C. xx. 22.) *He breathed upon them, saying, Receive you the Holy Ghost.*

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After the Exorcism, the Priest makes the Sign of the Cross upon the Child; first on the Forehead, which is the Seat of Bashfulness, to give you to understand, that you ought never to be ashamed of the Cross of *Christ*; then on the Breast, to teach you, that you ought always to have *Christ* crucified in your Hearts. This Ceremony St. *Augustin* makes mention of; for speaking to the Chatechumen, 'You are, says he, to be sign'd this Day on your Forehead with the Sign of the Cross, that hereafter the Devil may be afraid to touch you, as being marked with this saving Sign. The Ceremonies being perform'd, Salt is put into the Mouth of the Baptized; to signify to you, that God, by Virtue of his Holy Spirit, would season and preserve your Hearts and Minds, so that you may be able hereafter to keep yourselves clean and pure from the Stench and Filth of Sin, and that you may perceive the Savour and Taste of good Works, and that you be not any more corrupted with Sin. By this Taste then of Salt, you are admonish'd, that all your Works and Words ought to be seasoned with Christian Prudence and Wisdom, of which Salt is an Emblem, in as much as it seasons and gives a Relish to all Things.

After this the Priest conducts the Baptiz'd into the Church or Chapel, and so to the Font, saying, *Enter into the Church of God, that thou mayst have Part with Christ, unto Life everlasting.*

Then the Priest toucheth the Ears and Nostril of the Infant with Spittle. This Ceremony some People laugh at; but St. *Ambrose* makes mention of it, saying, (L. 1. Sacram. et de iis qui Myst. init. C. 1.) 'Therefore the Priest toucheth thy Ears, that they may be opened to hear the Commands of God; and thy Nostrils, that thou receive the good Odour of Faith and Devotion.' The Priest does this in Imitation of *Christ*, who by a like Ceremony anointed the Eyes of a blind Man, as we read in the Gospel;

## Disc. II. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 25

Gospel [Joh. ix. 6.]; and also put his Finger into the Ears of a deaf Man, [St. Mar. vii. 33] and said, *Ephphatha*, that is to say, Be thou opened.

When this is done, the Priest asks him who is to be baptized, *Do you renounce the Devil, and all his Works and Poms?* To which the Godfather and Godmother answer, in the Name of the Infant, (to every Question) *I renounce them.* Of this Renouncing *Tertullian* makes mention, (L. de Coron. Mil. C. 13.) above thirteen hundred Years ago; and also *St. Cyprian*, (Epist. 7. 54.) and *St. Augustin*, 'You have professed, says he, to renounce the Devil, and that not only to Men, but to God and his Angels.' Perhaps some one may say, Infants have not the Use of Reason, therefore they cannot renounce the Devil. To this I answer, That Children perform this, and profess their Faith by the Words of their Godfathers and Godmothers, who answer for them. Hence it is, Godfathers and Godmothers make themselves in some Sort Sureties for their God-Children; and therefore they are obliged to instruct them, or at least see that they are instructed, in Matters of Faith, when they come to the Use of Reason; and take Care that they perfectly know the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Ten Commandments*, the *Seven Sacraments*, and those Things which are the first Rudiments of the Christian Religion. Give ear to what *St. Augustin* says, (Serm. 163. de Temp. & Serm. 165.) 'I admonish you, dear Brethren, says he, both Men and Women, who are Godfathers and Godmothers, that you are Sureties before God, for the Children you answer for at the sacred Font;' you ought therefore to be solicitous for them in order to their Salvation.

These Things being performed, the Priest anoints the Infant, or baptized Person, with holy Oil, on the Breast and Shoulders: The anointing the Breast is to signify to you, the Necessity of fortifying the Heart with Heavenly Courage to act manfully, and

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to do your Duty in all Things; and the anointing between the Shoulders is to signify, the Necessity of the like Grace, to bear and support all the Adversities and Crosses of this mortal Life.

The Unction being made, the Child is baptized with Water (as mentioned before) and the Priest signeth the Child with the Sign of the Cross, with holy Oil or Chrism, on the Top of the Head, to signify that you are now become a Member of *Jesus Christ*, and that he is now your Head, and that you are consecrated to him in Baptism: For 'tis the Custom of the Church, to anoint all those Things which she solemnly consecrates to the Service of God.

After this the Priest puts over the Baptized a white Garment or Covering, called the *Chrisom*, to signify, says St. *Ambrose*, that you then put off the Robe of Sin, and put on the chaste Veil of Innocence.

Lastly a burning or lighted Candle is given to the Baptized, to put you in Mind to prepare yourselves worthily for the Coming of the Spouse, not with an extinguished Lamp, like the foolish Virgins mentioned in the Gospel, (Matth. xxv.) but with a burning Lamp; that is, with Faith not dead, but which is burning with Charity. By this, dear Christians, you may plainly see that there is nothing superstitious or vain in the Ceremonies of Baptism. Besides, as St. *Augustin* says, (Epist. 118.) 'To question the Ceremonies of the Universal Church, or to dispute of them, as tho' they were not to be done, is most insolent Madness.'

Now to give you a clear Idea of the Excellency and Virtue of this Sacrament, you need only consider three Things. 1<sup>st</sup>, What a miserable State you were in before you were baptized. 2<sup>dly</sup>, How by your Baptism you were freed from this Misery. And, 3<sup>dly</sup>, What an Honour you are raised to by receiving the Grace of Baptism.

You



## Dise. II. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 27

You know that our first Parents, by their Disobedience to the Law of God, made us all Sinners and Enemies to God; and so we were all condemned to eternal Punishment for want of original Justice, as being all born in Sin: For, as St. Paul says, (Ephes. ii. 3.) *We were by Nature the Children of Wrath.* Behold then the woful Consequence of one single Sin of Disobedience! a Misfortune much more to be lamented, as it is so universal, that even Infants themselves must feel the heavy Weight of it. But 'tis here as in other Things, we are to admire the divine Providence, whose Judgments and Ways are incomprehensible to Men. Let an Enemy of our Faith attack us upon the Mystery of the holy Eucharist, or any other Point of the Catholick Doctrine, I'll ask him what Reason he can give why *Adam's* Posterity should be punished for *Adam's* Sin? Why Children, who never committed any Sin themselves should be damned for the Sin of their first Parents? I'll desire him to explain to me from Reason alone, the Sacred Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, viz. the Unity and Trinity of God; let him tell me, if he can, according to our weak Way of Thinking, how one and the same divine Nature, can be three distinct Persons? and yet this is what all Christians believe, as well as Catholicks: but here it is that Faith must save us: whereas if we follow our own Imaginations, we shall be lost. Nor can it be said, that we, who believe the Doctrine of *Christ*, have no Reason to give for the Articles of our Faith, since we have the strongest and best of Reasons on our Side, viz. the Word of God, and the unerring Authority of his Church, which we are bound to hear, (Matth. xviii. 17.) because she can teach nothing but Truth; for *Christ* has promised that *he and his Holy Spirit will abide with her to the End of the World, and teach her all Truth;* (Joh. xiv. 16. 17.) and that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.* (Matth. xxviii. 19.) Upon these two

## 28 On the Sacrament of Baptism. Disc. II.

Motives we ground our Faith and build our Hopes; and as to what is above the Reach of our weak Understanding, we cultivate Reason to make it obedient to Faith, and say with St. Paul, *O the Depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are thy Judgments, and unsearchable thy Ways!* who can pretend to know the Will of God, or who dare presume to counsel him?

Ah! dear Christians, what Comfort for you, to find so wholesome a Remedy in the Sacrament of Baptism, against the Misfortune you are all born to! Could you desire any more convincing Proof, than this, of the Excellency of this Sacrament? For what preserved you from the greatest of all Miseries, viz. your being separated from God, but this Sacrament? Do but think seriously on what you were before Baptism; then you were not Members of the Church of *Christ*, out of which there is no Salvation.

The first Ceremony performed at your Baptism, was to bring you into the Church; 'Enter, says the Priest, into the Temple of God, that you may have Part with *Christ*.' Now as you belonged not to that chaste Spouse of *Jesus Christ*, the Church, before your Baptism, to whom then do you think you belong'd? I'll tell you; you were then under the Tyranny of the Devil, and belonged to him; and it was for this Reason the Minister of *Christ* ordered him to quit your Soul, saying, 'Begone, Satan, from this Child, who is the Image of God, that the Holy Ghost the Comforter, may take place in his Soul.' You see then, that before Baptism, you were Slaves to Satan; but the Minister of God, acting in his Name, and by his Power, set you at Liberty.

The miserable State you were in before Baptism, is signified to you by the Exorcisms, which are an ancient Ceremony of the Church. Give ear to what the Priest says in this Ceremony, 'I exorcise thee, unclean Spirit, in the Name of the Father, and  
of

## Disc. II. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 29

‘ of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and command thee to depart from this Servant of God.’ Therefore this malignant Spirit had Possession of your Souls, and he could not be dispossest’d but by invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. O the infinite Goodness of God, who gave to Men, his Ministers, so great a Power and Command over evil Spirits! And from whom do the Ministers of *Christ* receive this Power, but from *Jesus Christ* himself?

Another Thing which shews you the Excellency of this Sacrament, and which ought to make you ever thankful to God for having received it, is this, Because you could do nothing yourselves which could deserve so great a Blessing; for Almighty God, out of his pure Mercy and Goodness, conferred it upon you, without the least Merit or Desert on your Side. Let us then thank the divine Goodness, who has chosen us, preferably to so many others, who never had the Happiness to receive this Sacrament: Let us, I say, thank and praise Almighty God for so great a Favour, and add to our Sentiments of Adoration, a most lively Acknowledgment; which ought to be so much the greater, as our Baptism raises us to so sublime and elevated a Condition.

The Degree of Honour you are raised to by Baptism, is, that you are made Christians; and what can be greater or more noble? For to be a Christian, is to be a Disciple of *Jesus Christ*; ’tis to have God for your Father, and to be Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. The greatest Titles in this World, Honours, Riches, and Nobility, all are nothing, if compared to the Honour of being a Christian. So whether you be poor, or rich, or whatever State or Condition you be in, if you are true Christians, you are Brethren of *Jesus Christ*, and Heirs of his Kingdom. Consider then frequently with yourselves, dear Christians, what you were before Baptism: You were, says the Apostle, in *Darkness*; and what

30 *On the Sacrament of Baptism. Disc. II.*

drew you from that miserable State of Darkness, but your Baptism?

O how happy were you then, to be received into the Catholick Church! how happy, to have been made the adopted Sons of the Almighty, Heirs of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven, and joint Heirs with *Christ*! to have been, by the Providence and Mercy of God, drawn from the Power of Darkness, from the Slavery of the Prince of Darkness! You who were born Objects of God's eternal Hatred, liable to eternal Misery, subject to the endless Pains of Hell: Oh! how grateful ought you to be for this Benefit, which God has bestowed upon you before so many, even much the greater Part of the World, preferring you to so many, who perhaps would have made far better Use of such a Blessing. Why were you not born amongst *Infidels*, *Jews*, or *Turks*? Why were you preferred before so many Millions in the World, who are born and die in Sin? You were born in Sin, and as deserving of Hell as they. For in *Adam* all have sinned, says St. Paul, (Rom. v. 12.) You were born Sinners, as sure as you were the Sons of *Adam*; you were excluded, by his Prevarication, from the Kingdom of Heaven for ever. Was there any Reason then that Almighty God could have, to love you more than them? Could you deserve to be loved more than they? Not in the least; you were born his Enemies as well as they; it was not any Merit or Desert on your Side; but it was the pure Goodness and Mercy of God, who made you his adopted Sons, by the Baptism of *Christ*; whilst his Justice left them the Slaves of Sin and the Devil. 'Twas his Goodness which preferred *Jacob*, that chose you. 'Twas his Justice which left *Esau* an Object of his Hatred, that permitted them to remain in their Darkness and Misery, who were created of the same Dust and Clay; you Vessels of Honour, and left them Vessels of Disgrace. O let us, dear Christians, ever bless and praise the  
infinite



Disc. II. *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* 31

infinite Goodness of God, who by calling us to the Grace of Baptism, has put us in the Way to Life everlasting.

D I S C. III.

*On the SACRAMENT of BAPTISM.*

*Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*  
Matth. xxviii. 19.

WE were all born in Sin, but by the particular Providence of God, we have been washed from this original Guilt by the Waters of Baptism, and by the Merits of our Saviour *Christ*. But what will it avail you to have been adopted among the Children of *Christ*, and Heirs of his Kingdom, if your Lives have not been answerable to this Character? You were then made Christians, you bear yet the Name of Christians, but have you lived like Christians? Have you complied with the indispensable Obligations incumbent upon you, by the Engagement and Promise you made to God at your Baptism? This is what you ought often to set before your Eyes. The Obligations then which you contracted in your Baptism, shall be the Subject of this Discourse.

When you received the Sacrament of Baptism, the Priest, in quality of God's Vicegerent, asked you, if you renounced Satan, who is God's great enemy. You made Answer, in the Presence of Heaven and Earth, in the Sight of God and his Angels, by the Mouth of your Godfather and Godmother, That you renounced him. The Priest continued, and asked you, If you renounced all his Poms. You answered again by the same Mouth, That you renounced them. He added farthermore, And all his Works; and you protested

### 32 On the Sacrament of Baptism. Dis. III.

protested that you renounced them. But O how little do People heed these Promises ! or supposing them to be mindful of them, their Guilt is the greater for breaking them so audaciously. Nevertheless it will be upon account of these Promises, that God will judge you so strictly at the last Day ; the Sentence thereof will be pronounced according as you have kept or broken those Promises and Vows, which you made to God in your Baptism. Consider therefore frequently with yourselves, what you then renounced.

First, you renounced the Devil ; but now you seem to make little or no Account of that Promise ; though all the holy Fathers have had the greatest Regard and Veneration for it, and never speak of it but in Terms which shew plainly what they thought of it. St. *Chrysostom* says, (Hom. 25.) ‘ That it is a Bond, and ‘ a very great Obligation, by which we engage ourselves to God.’ St. *Jerome*, in his Epistle to *Heli- odorus*, says, ‘ That it is a solemn Oath, which we ‘ make to God, to be always faithful to him, and ‘ never to adhere to the Devil.’ ‘ Be mindful, says ‘ St. *Ambrose*, (L. 1. de Sac. C. 2.) where and to ‘ whom you made this Promise.’ You ought therefore to reflect frequently upon the Engagements you made when you renounced the Devil in Baptism ; you then promised to give yourself entirely to God ; and he lays his Claim and Title to you, and has imprinted his Arms in the indelible Character given in Baptism (like a Seal or Stamp, which the greatest Sins are not able to take away ; the which notwithstanding, by Sin, becomes an infamous Mark of Treachery and Rebellion in him who carries it,) to be a continual Proof that you belong to him. ’Tis upon this Principle that S. *Paul* says, in so many Places in his Epistles, (1 Cor. vi. 19.) *That we are not now our own*, but that we belong to God ; that we are his *Temple*, (1. Cor. iii. 7.) his place of *Abode*, his *Sanctuary*, which he has consecrated to himself.

You

### Dis. III. *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* 33

You belong not to yourselves, you are not for yourselves, since you are consecrated to God by Baptism. Your Lives are not your own, they ought to be employed in the Service of God, to whom you stand indebted for them. Your Bodies are not yours, your Eyes are not yours, God lent them you, to make use of them in lawful Things, but not to behold immodest Objects; your Tongues are not your own, so that you ought never to employ them in evil Discourse, but to make use of them in blessing him, to whom they belong; your Hearts are not yours, they are God's Property, so that all the Affections you set upon Creatures, when not referred to God, are so many Robberies. In fine, you have nothing which properly speaking belongs to yourselves.

But above all, 'tis chiefly your Souls that appertain to God, upon which, in your Baptism, he has imprinted his Image; and in Consideration thereof, you should often say to yourselves, O my Soul, I belong to God, I am his by a multiplicity of Titles, but particularly by my Consecration in Baptism, and the Donation I then made of myself to God; must it not then be a grievous Sacrilege in me, if after consecrating myself to God, as I have done in Baptism, I should profane myself by making a criminal Use of my Soul and Body? What can I expect, or what Punishment ought I not to fear, if I profane my Soul with Sin? Ah! why then should I not deliver myself up to God in perpetual Servitude, to whom I entirely belong? Why should I not live in a voluntary Subjection, and an agreeable Dependence, on his divine Will and Conduct? What, my Soul, wilt thou never be subject to thy God, seeing that upon this doth depend both my Perfection and Salvation?

Let us then, dear Christians, give ourselves to God with all our Hearts, since we have devoted ourselves to him, of our own free Choice, in Baptism, by promising to be faithful to him: This was the first  
Promise

### 34 *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* Disc. III.

Promise we made to God when we renounced the Devil. Now let us see the second (which is only a Consequence of the former) whereby we renounced all his Poms and Works.

There are but few Christians who are willing to have any open Dealings with the Devil; and there is scarce one who does not make Profession, if not by his Actions, at least by his Words, to have no Communication with that Enemy of God, and consequently who does not willingly ratify the first Promise he made in his Baptism of renouncing Satan. But as to his Poms and Works, it is far otherwise; for there are but very few Persons, who in Reality renounce them as they ought, and who are even willing to say they renounce them; and consequently very few, who are faithful to this Promise of their Baptism, whereby they engage themselves to renounce all the Poms and Works of the Devil. 'Tis no difficult Matter, Dear Christians, to conceive what these Poms are; the very Word itself shews plainly, that by it are meant, all the Pomp and Grandeur of this World which exceeds the Bounds of Necessity; or at least, all that which Reason and a becoming Decency does not require.

Now as to the Works of Satan, in their general Signification, and widest Extent, are understood all Sorts of Thoughts, Words and Actions, whereby we transgress the Law of God; that is to say, all the Sins that rob us of the Grace of God, and kill the Soul; and they are called the Works of Satan, because he is the principal Author of them. But if we take the Word in a stricter Signification, the Works of Satan are the Occasions of Sin; that is to say, those Places and Assemblies where the Devil reigns, by the wicked Example of such, as in pursuing their own vicious Inclinations, involve others in the same wicked Practices, and the like Occasions of Sin; from which no one hardly ever escapes, without



### Disc. III. *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* 35

without having his Soul defiled with Sin. Or if you will have another Explanation of it, the Works of Satan are the Rules and Maxims of the wicked World, or rather the Devil, who is the Prince thereof. For Instance, that we must receive no Affront, but have Satisfaction if we can; that we must extol ourselves above all others, as much as in us lies; that we must enrich ourselves by any Means whatsoever; and other like pernicious Maxims. Behold now, dear Christians, the Works of Satan, which you have solemnly renounced in Baptism, and consequently you cannot practise them, without perjur- ing yourself in a most criminal Manner.

By Baptism you have engaged yourselves to re- nounce the World, to separate your Affections, to die to Sin and the World. *Are you ignorant*, says St. Paul, (Rom. vi. 3.) *that whosoever is baptized must die, as our Saviour Christ died?* What a Shame not to keep a Promise made to God, when any Man ought to be ashamed of breaking a Promise made to another, especially to a Friend, or to his Prince! If then you have made a solemn Promise to God at your Bap- tism, as certainly you have, be sure to keep it: But let me beg of you to examine yourselves well on this Point, and cast an Eye back upon your Actions, and see whether you have renounced the Devil, his Poms and Works, in Thought, Word and Deed: Have you in the Time of Temptations stood faith- ful to your Promise? Have you not taken Delight in the Works of the Devil, which he proposed to you? Have you not in Words renounced Almighty God, and joined with the Devil? For how often do Persons wish themselves and others at the Devil, and if Almighty God should take them at their Word, as the Devil is very willing he should, where would they have been long before this? Now, can it be said that such Persons renounce the Devil, who have him so frequently in their Mouths, who imitate him by their Oaths, Curses and Blasphemies, which  
the

### 36 On the Sacrament of Baptism. Disc. III.

the Devil and damned Souls in Hell continually vomit forth against God? In fine, have you renounced the Works and Poms of the Devil? Have you never consented to the Works of Darknes, to Sins of Gluttony, Drunkenness, Impurity? To Sins of Detraction, Anger, Hatred, and Revenge? To Sins of Disobedience, of frequent Omissions of the Precepts of God? Can your Consciences say you have always been free, that you have always remained united to God? You are happy, dear Christians, and thrice happy too, provided you have persevered, and kept your Promise to God: But if you have many Times, and many Ways fallen into Sins and Abominations against God; if your Hearts, instead of renouncing the Works of the Devil, have, been settled on them; if you have loved the Pleasures, Riches, and Grandeur this World affords, what then must you expect? What Plea can you make? Give Ear to the terrible Threats of St. Paul, (1 Cor. vi. 9.) *Know you not, says he, that the Unjust shall not possess the Kingdom of Heaven? Be not deceived, for neither Fornicators nor Adulterers, nor the Effeminate, nor Sodomites, nor Thieves, nor the Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Railers, nor Extortioners shall possess the Kingdom of God.* So that there is no Heaven for those Persons who follow their own Passions, who yield to the Works of the Devil, which they solemnly promised to renounce.

But you have not only engaged yourselves by Baptism, to renounce the Devil, his Works and Poms; but also to follow, and imitate *Christ*: You must remember what St. Paul says, (Gal. iii. 27.) *that whosoever have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.* Now what is it to have put on *Christ*? It is to live so, that *Christ* appear in all our Actions. For as a Garment covers a Person all over, that nothing else appears, so to put on *Christ*, is to make all our Actions conformable to *Christ*, so that all of them resemble the Actions of *Christ*. And as the exterior

Habit

### Disc. III. On the Sacrament of Baptism. 37

Habit does distinguish the Persons of Honour from the common People, so must the Habit of Christians, this Robe of Virtue, distinguish a true Christian from all others.

Again, a Person, who is baptized makes Profession of the Faith of *Christ*, chooses it for his Vocation; what a Shame then not to endeavour to be perfect in it! Persons in the World, what Pains do they not take to improve themselves? What Anxieties do not Merchants undergo, for gaining the transitory Riches of this World? What Pains do Scholars take to become Learned? And strange, that a Christian should not endeavour to perfect himself in the Vocation of *Christ*! that neither the Love of Almighty God, nor the Promises of eternal Happiness, nor the Fear of Punishment, can prevail upon him, to make him seriously apply himself, and study how to be a perfect Christian, as he is obliged to be.

Every one is obliged to Perfection; not only Priests and Religious, but all who have put on *Christ*; 'tis what our Saviour *Christ* himself commands: *Be you perfect*, says he, (Matth. v. 48.) *as your heavenly Father is perfect*. 'Tis usual for Children to take after their Father, to imitate him, to love what he loves, and hate what he hates. Almighty God is your Father, you must therefore imitate him, and not degenerate; love Virtue and hate Sin.

In fine, at your Baptism you were made Christians, and now you profess to be so, and remain so: But give me leave to ask you, what is it to be a Christian? 'Tis not only to believe; for, as our Saviour says, (Matth. vii. 21.) *Not every one that says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who doth the Will of my Father who is in Heaven*. So that the bare Name of a Christian will signify nothing in order to Salvation, unless you keep the Commandments of God, and practise Christian Perfections;

for

### 38 *On the Sacrament of Baptism.* Dis. III.

for there is no following of *Christ* without taking up his Cross; without the Exercise of Mortification, Humility, and Poverty of Spirit; without imitating the Patience, the Charity, and other Virtues of our Saviour *Christ*.

Has your Life hitherto, and your Thoughts, Words and Actions, been like unto his? Has your Life been spent in the Exercise of those Virtues? Have you lived mortified, chaste, humble, obedient, patient, fervent in Prayer, and the Practice of good Works? Has your Exterior and Interior been conformable to *Christ*, in Thought, Word, and Deed? Have you sanctified your Bodies, as the Temple of God? O happy Souls who comply with these Obligations! What a Comfort and Joy will it be to them, at the Hour of Death, to have kept their Robes of Innocence undefiled? But alas! where shall we find this baptismal Innocence in this unhappy Age?

In fine, if it has been your Misfortune to defile your baptismal Innocence by mortal Sin; let me exhort you, to make Haste to wash away with penitential Tears those dreadful Stains of Sin, which otherwise must be the Fuel of Hell's merciless Flames for all Eternity. Ah! dear Christians, never be unmindful of the Promises you made to Almighty God at your Baptism; and if hitherto you have not been faithful to the Renunciation you made in your Baptism, now at least renew it, but let it be with greater Sincerity than heretofore; say from the Bottom of your Hearts, I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy malignant Suggestions; I renounce thy Customs, Laws, and Maxims; I renounce all thy Pumps, and Grandeurs, all thy Vanity, and false Charms, which thou throwest in my Way, thy deceitful Riches, the vain Pleasures of a wicked World, wherewith thou flatterest thy Followers. 'Tis you, O sweet *Jesus*, that I will henceforth follow; your Maxims and Laws shall be the Rule to  
which



Dis. I. *On the Sacrament of Confirmation*, 39

which I will conform myself, and it shall be by them that I will hereafter ever regulate my Life and Conduct. For these are sure Guides, that whosoever follows, he cannot be led astray; and if you are faithful in following them, they will infallibly conduct you to the Port of Bliss.

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D I S C. I.

*On the SACRAMENT of CONFIRMATION.*

*Then they imposed their Hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts. viii.*

**A**LTHO' the Sacrament of Baptism confers, or gives Grace to all Men, and infuseth the Holy Spirit into them; makes them the Children of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven: Yet the Devil, the mortal Enemy of Mankind, envying the Felicity of those who are baptized, endeavours with all his Force to rob them of the Grace they received in the Sacrament of Baptism: Wherefore we all stand in Need of new Help and Strength, that we may be better able to sustain the Assaults of the Devil; and for that End, another Sacrament was instituted by our Saviour *Christ*; whereby new Strength is given, to such as are baptized, against the Assaults of the Devil, which is called the Sacrament of Confirmation. The which I shall endeavour to explain in Part, in the following Discourse; by first shewing that it is a Sacrament, and that the Apostles administered it to the Faithful with wonderful Effect; and that it was also the Practice of the primitive Ages to make use of this Sacrament, which was held in great Veneration amongst them. I will also explain to you the Ceremonies contained therein,

The :

## 40 On the Sacrament of Confirmation. Dis. I.

The Sacraments of the new Law, being visible Signs, to which Grace is annexed; so that none but God can be the Author and Establisher of such an Institution: And tho' it is not certainly known, at what Time precisely this Sacrament was instituted; yet we meet with an early Practice of it in the Acts of the Apostles (C. viii.) when St. *Peter* and St. *John* went down to *Jerusalem*, to confirm those of *Samarita*, who had been before converted to the Christian Faith, and baptized by *Philip* the Deacon. The Ceremony was performed by Imposition of Hands, whereby they received the Holy Ghost.

Here all Things required to make a Sacrament are to be found, viz. a visible Sign, in the Imposition of Hands, and Grace, by conferring the Holy Ghost. We also find this Promise of Grace, in the 16th Chapter of St. *John*, where *Christ* told his Apostles, that when he should leave them, he would send the Holy Ghost upon them. And the Performance of this Promise appears again, in the second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles; as also again, in the 19th Chapter, when those who were baptized, received the Holy-Ghost a-new, by the Imposition of the Apostles Hands; which is a clear Proof, that *Christ* instituted this Sacrament; for 'tis certain that the Apostles could not, by such a Ceremony, give the Holy Ghost, if *Christ* had not ordained it for that End. 'Confirmation therefore is a Sacrament instituted by *Christ*, to confer unto our Souls the Holy Ghost, and an Increase of our Baptismal Grace, to resist with a manly Strength, and to encounter courageously with all our ghostly Enemies, and to profess constantly the Faith of *Christ*.'

This the Doctors and Fathers of the Church assert. 'The Flesh, says *Tertullian* (L. de resur. carn.) is anointed, that the Soul may be fortified.' And *Peter Damian* witnesseth the same, in these Words,  
speaking

## Dis. I. On the Sacrament of Confirmation. 41

speaking of Confirmation, ' The Spirit is given in  
' Baptism as to Pardon, but here to fight ; there we  
' are cleansed from Iniquities, here we are fortified  
' with Courage.' By which Words he declares,  
that the Sacrament of Confirmation was instituted by  
*Christ* to be administered after Baptism, that every  
Christian may be fortified in the Soul, with Virtues,  
against the Assaults of the Devil. The same does Pope  
*Melchiades* (who lived fourteen Hundred Years ago)  
teacheth us in his Epistle to the Bishops of *Spain* : ' I  
' sought whether Baptism, or Imposition of Hands,  
' was the greatest Sacrament; but know that they  
' are both great Sacraments. In Baptism, says he,  
' a Man is received to Warfare, and in Confirmation  
' he is armed to fight ; in Baptism we are regenerat-  
' ed to Life, after Baptism we are confirmed to  
' fight ; in Baptism we are washed, after Baptism  
' we are strengthened.' Which different Gifts of  
each Sacrament shined clearly in the Apostles ; who  
altho' they were baptized, yet they were not endowed  
with that Courage, as to be able to perform those  
Things, which a Christian ought to do. Therefore  
*Christ* at his Ascension did not exhort them to enter  
the Field of Battle before they were confirmed, and  
made perfect Soldiers, saying (Luke xxiv. 49.) *Stay*  
*you in the City, till you be vested with Power from above.*  
As if he would say, O my beloved Apostles ! altho'  
you are baptized, and have received the Grace of  
the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, you are not strong  
enough to confess my Name, nor sufficiently valiant,  
or able to overcome all the Temptations of the World,  
and the Devil ; therefore go not out to Battle, my  
Soldiers, before I send you from Heaven spiritual  
Arms, wherewith you may be able to defend your-  
selves against your Adversaries, and the Snares of the  
Devil. For, as St. *brysostom* says, no one suffers  
Soldiers to rush forth into the midst of their Enemies,  
before they are well armed ; so neither did *Christ* suf-  
fer his Apostles to appear in Battle, before the Holy  
Ghost

## 42 On the Sacrament of Confirmation. Dis. II

Ghost descended upon them. And these spiritual Arms the Apostles received from Heaven, on the very Day of *Pentecost*, as we read in the Acts, (C. ii. 2.) *On a sudden a Noise was formed from Heaven, and it filled the whole House where they were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* By which Words, says St. *Bernard*, it is manifest, that the Apostles were then confirmed with Virtue and Courage from above. Now they fly not, says he, nor hide themselves, for Fear of the *Jews*; now they are all Zeal, all Courage, and all Faith.

The Time was, when they shut themselves up in a Room, and durst not appear, for Fear of the *Jews*; but now they open the Doors, and in the Publick Streets preach up *Christ* their Messiah; and this, not before a small Number of pious Souls who would be glad to hear them, but before the worst of their Enemies; and with so much Freedom reproached their Disbelief, and Cruelty in crucifying the World's Redeemer, that they give evident Proof they fear none but God. The Chief of the *Jews* were enraged at their Courage and Boldness, and therefore charged them to preach *Christ* no more to the People. But St. *Peter* now, with a Liberty becoming his Zeal, asks them, if it be fit to obey them rather than God.

Since Words have no Effect, they add Stripes to Threats, and take them before the Council, where they are severely whipt; but they, says St. *Luke*, (Acts v.) returned with Joy in their Hearts, because they were thought worthy to suffer for *Christ*. Whence is this unusual Courage and Zeal? 'tis dear Christians, from the Holy Ghost, from this divine Spirit, who now rules in their Hearts, for he gives new Life to all who fight under him, and a more than usual Zeal and Virtue, to all those who receive any Warmth from his divine Fire.

Is not this Encouragement enough, to make you earnestly desire to receive this Sacrament, this divine Spirit? that his divine Light may clear your Understanding,



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standing, and give you a true Sense of your Duty, and eternal Interest? for he is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding; that his Fire may quicken your Zeal, and inflame your Devotion? for he is the Spirit of Piety; that he may be a Strength to you, in Time of Persecution and Trouble; that you may be neither oppress'd by their Multiplicity, nor sink under their Weight? for he is the Spirit of Counsel, and Fortitude.

The Enemies of the Catholick Church, either neglect this Ceremony intirely; or those who practise it, look not upon it to be a Sacrament. The first pretend, that it was only a temporary Ceremony, during no longer than the Apostles Time; and that the Effects ceasing, viz. the visible conferring of the Holy Ghost, the Ceremony itself ought no longer to be made use of. But 'tis easily answered, that there is the same Reason to continue the Ceremony of Confirmation, as that of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Eucharist; seeing that it was always practised in the primitive Ages, and handed down to us ever since. As to the Effects ceasing, 'tis true in regard of the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost, the first establishing of the Gospel, only requiring that miraculous Effect; but the invisible Effect, and Operation of the Holy Ghost, still subsists, as the antient Fathers unanimously affirm.

Those who make use of this Ceremony, but deny it to be a Sacrament, alledge, that it is no more than a Catechising of Children, and confirming them in their Belief, in a more solemn Manner, after they are arrived at the Use of Reason. But in this they contradict the express Words of Scripture, whereby 'tis declared, that the Holy Ghost, or Grace, is given by the Imposition of Hands. They contradict the Doctrine of the primitive Fathers, who not only call it a Sacrament, but place it in some Degree, with the Sacrament of Baptism. Besides how can it only be a Ceremony to instruct Children, and confirm

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them in their Belief, after they are arrived at the Use of Reason, seeing that it was the Practice in the primitive Ages, to confirm Infants as soon as the were baptized, and before they were capable of Instruction?

Now, dear Christians, as the Sacrament of Baptism consists of two Parts, *viz. Matter and Form*, as Water, which is called the Matter, and those Words, *I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, which are the Form: So there is also a *Matter and Form*, in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Matter is the Imposition of Hands, and Anointing with Chrism; the Form are these Words, *I sign thee with the Sign of the Cross, and Confirm thee with the Chrism of Salvation, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. This Matter and Form is well grounded both in the Scriptures and constant Tradition of the Church. The Imposition of Hands, upon this Occasion, is expressly mentioned in the *Acts* (Chap. xix.) of the Apostles; and anointing with Oil is a constant Ceremony, both in the Old and New Testament, when Persons are consecrated to the Service of God. Kings and Priests were anointed in the old Law; and St. Paul makes mention of Anointing, (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) and the Sick were anointed, as St. James orders, (C. v. 14) when the Priests were called in to assist them at the Hour of Death. 'Tis true, no express Mention is made of Anointing, where the Scripture speaks of Confirmation: But the constant Tradition and Practice of the Church, from the very earliest Times of Christianity, justifies the Ceremony. *Tertullian* says, 'The Flesh is anointed, that the Soul may be consecrated.' And St. *Clement* says, (In Decret. Pont. de Consec. Dist. 5.) 'All must make haste without Delay to be born again to God (that is, to be baptized) and then at last, to be signed and anointed by a Bishop; as we have received from Peter, and the

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‘ the rest of the Apostles have taught us, our Lord  
‘ commanding it.’ Hence it was always the Custom  
to anoint those who were baptized, confirmed, and  
consecrated by holy Orders, or lay in Danger of  
Death by Sicknes: And therefore St. *Augustin* calls  
Confirmation (L. 2. Con. cit. petit. C. 104) *The Sa-  
crament of Chrism.*

The *Form* of Confirmation is answerable to the  
Nature of the Sacrament. The Invocation of the  
Blessed Trinity, points out the Power, whereby the  
Sacrament works its Effect. The Words *I confirm  
thee*, intimate the principal and proper Effect of the  
Sacrament, which is a strengthening Grace. The  
Sign of the Cross imports, that the Person who re-  
ceives the Sacrament, has now engaged himself, and  
put on Armour, to be a Soldier of *Christ*.

As to the Minister of this Sacrament, it appears,  
both from the Scriptures, the Practice of the primi-  
tive Ages, and the constant Doctrine of the Learned,  
that it ought to be a Bishop, (Acts viii.) For *Phi-  
lip* the Deacon, and others employ’d in the Conversion  
of the *Samaritans*, had already baptized them, but  
they did not undertake to give the Holy Ghost, by  
Imposition of Hands: For to perform this Work,  
St. *Peter* and St. *John*, who were both Bishops,  
were dispatched from *Jerusalem*. And where-ever  
Mention is made of this Sacrament, in the Writings  
of the ancient Fathers, the Administration is said al-  
ways to belong to the *Præpositi*, or chief Superiors in  
the Church; and namely, to those of the Episcopal  
Order. There is no Occasion to alledge any other  
Reason for this Oeconomy, besides the Institution,  
and the Authority of the Church; tho’ it seems to  
be required, or at least very suitable to the Nature of  
the Sacrament: For the Character conferred by Con-  
firmation being a kind of Commission to fight un-  
der *Christ’s* Banner; and Commissions being usually  
granted by the chief Commanders of an Army, the

Prelates of God's Church are very properly appointed for that Purpose.

Now as to the Ceremonies performed in this Sacrament, the first Thing you are to take Notice of, is the Matter that is applied, which is twofold, viz. the Imposition of Hands, and Oil, with the Mixture of sweet Balm. *The Imposition of Hands* betokens the inward spreading of the Holy Ghost, or Grace of God in the Soul, at the same Time that the outward Benediction is pronounced. *The Oil mixt with Balm*, which is called *Chrism*, and blessed only by a Bishop, puts us in mind of several spiritual Advantages, to which it has an Allusion. The Properties of Oil are to cleanse and preserve Metals from Rust, and was commonly made use of to render the Limbs supple and active, when they are to shew their Abilities by Wrestling and other Performances of the Body. This is an Emblem of that Spirit and Liveliness, which a Christian ought to discover in the Profession of his Faith and Duties of his Religion; being an Effect of the inward Unction of the Holy Ghost. *The sweet Balm* that is mixt with the Oil, signifies the Odour of a good Life, which diffuses itself by Example and edifying Behaviour. *A Blow* is given upon the Cheek of those who receive this Sacrament, to put them in Mind of Persecution, and the Obligation they lie under to suffer all Sorts of Hardships, Loss of Goods, Imprisonment, and even Death itself, rather than forsake their Religion.

*A Cross* is made on the Forehead, as the most proper Place to express a Christian's Behaviour, when he comes to be questioned about his Religion; for as the Forehead or Countenance is the Seat of Bashfulness, or Resolution and Firmness of Temper, so the Sign of the Cross is made there, to signify that we neither will be ashamed of owning our Religion, nor neglect the Practice of it, out of any worldly Consideration, or for fear of being ridiculed or pointed



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ed at by such as are but too apt to discountenance the humble Methods of the Gospel.

In fine, to take a short View of all the Obligations that are incumbent on a Christian, upon account of this Sacrament, you must consider yourselves as Soldiers listed under the Banner of *Christ*. By Baptism you are made Subjects, by Confirmation you put on Armour, and become Champions. And farther, you are favour'd with a new Character and Commission, to maintain the Cause of God and his Church, both by Words and Examples. This is a proper Reflection for all those, who being baptized within the Bosom of the Church, and have ratified the Engagement in the Sacrament of Confirmation, are so unfortunate, as to harbour any Thoughts of abandoning the House where they received their Education, and spurning at the Mother who gave them Suck. If there are any Instances of this Kind, as 'tis to be feared there are but too many, how will they be able to bear the Reproach, when at the Hour of Death they shall be call'd upon, and questioned concerning the Obligations of this Sacrament? How can they have the Assurance to shew that Forehead, which has been anointed, as a public Testimonial that they never would forsake the Cause they had undertaken? With what Countenance can they shew those Cheeks, which are smitten in Token of Persecution, who have neglected the Discipline of the Church, and thrown away the Cross of *Christ*, for the sake of Ease and Liberty?

All you therefore, who have received the Holy Ghost, in the Sacrament of Confirmation, consider with yourselves and see, whether or no you have ever been so ungrateful, as to banish him from your Souls; if so, 'tis high Time to wash off that Stain, by a sincere and speedy Repentance. Have you never been deaf to his gracious Call, by neglecting his holy Inspirations, and resisting his Grace? I doubt your Consciences bear Witness against you in

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this Point. Resolve therefore effectually, from this Moment, to be more obedient for the future. 'Tis by the Effects of this Holy Spirit, you are to be confirmed in your Faith, be patient under all Troubles, humble when provoked, meek when injured, peaceable with the Contentious, compassionate on the Distress'd, and never tired in doing your Duty, or suffering whatever is your Portion. 'Tis by this holy Mover, you are to be directed in all you undertake, helped in your Devotions, inflamed with the Love of God, and supported in every Obligation to yourselves or Neighbour: So that, whether in Time of Prosperity or Adversity; whether in spiritual Comfort or interior Darkness; whether in Time of Temptation, there is not one Step you can take aright, in order to Happiness, but as directed and moved by this Holy Spirit.

These, dear Christian, are some of the Effects of this divine Spirit, necessary for our Guidance to eternal Life; of which I shall speak more at large in the next Discourse. I shall therefore conclude with exhorting you, to reflect and consider seriously with yourselves, how many Ways you are apt to be deluded, both by Fear and Hopes, by the World, Vanity, and Self-love; how many Dangers surround you, how little you know what is truly good for you: So that you cannot but see, that the Assistance of the Holy Ghost is continually necessary for you, and that you cannot possibly go on, with any Degree of Security, without the Help of this Guide, this Light, this Strengtheners and Comforter: In a word, without his Assistance you are eternally lost. It behoves you then very much, earnestly to beseech this Divine Spirit to assist and heal your internal Wounds, and to give you an Increase of Virtue in this Life, that you may dwell for ever in his Glory in the next.

D I S C.

## DISC. II.

*On the SACRAMENT of CONFIRMATION.*

*Then they imposed their Hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts viii.*

I HAVE shew'd you, dear Christians, in the foregoing Discourse, that this Sacrament was instituted by *Christ*, to strengthen us in our Faith, and make us the better able to resist the Temptations of the Devil, in whatever may be contrary to our Belief in *Christ*; as also, that the Apostles administer'd this Sacrament with wonderful Effect, and that it was held in great Veneration amongst the primitive Christians. I have likewise explain'd the Ceremonies used therein. What therefore I intend in this Discourse, is, to lay before you the Effects and Necessity of this Sacrament; as also shew you, how you must prepare yourselves to receive it.

The general Effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation, is sanctifying Grace, which all are made Partakers of, who receive it with due Dispositions. The particular and peculiar Effect of this Sacrament is, a strengthening Grace, whereby we are made perfect Christians, and as it were fitted out, and furnished with what is necessary to comply with all the Duties of a Christian, and defend ourselves against all Enemies that can attack us. It gives a Courage, to behave ourselves manfully in Time of Persecution: It makes us stand upon our Guard, in Time of Temptations: It also inspires us with Knowledge, Courage and Zeal; witness the Apostles and Disciples, who after they had received the Holy Ghost, their Understandings were immediately elevated, to penetrate the most sublime Mysteries of Faith; demonstrating the Truth of the Christian Religion, from the Predictions of the Prophets concerning the

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Messiah; and this with so much Force and Efficacy, that the Chief Priest, and the most learn'd of the Jewish Law, were astonish'd to see themselves baffled by those whom they knew to be poor ignorant Fishermen. The most learn'd of the Jews were astonish'd at those wonderful Effects of the divine Grace in the Apostles; insomuch, that they were at a Loss, how to contradict the preaching of those inspired men, whose Doctrine they saw confirm'd by manifest Miracles; yet they were so far from being converted, that they plotted and caballed together, how to put a Stop to the Progress of the Gospel.

What Conclusion do they make, after this Conviction of their own Consciences? No other, than to charge the Apostles, at their Peril, not to preach the Christian Doctrine to any one living; a strange Example of Obstinacy in Sin!

But now, what very much deserves to be taken Notice of, is, how dangerous a thing it is, to let your Wills get the Start of your Understandings, in the Affairs of your Salvation. And yet, alas! is not this common now-a-days? Are there none, think you, who are convinced of the Truth of the true Faith, and yet don't embrace it, because some temporal Interest, some Post of Honour, to which their ambitious Inclinations hurry them on, is inconsistent with the Profession of it? But not to seek Examples out of the Church, are there no Catholics, whose Consciences tell them, don't engage yourselves in such and such Diversions, such and such Affairs, such and such Company; don't gratify this, or that Passion, 'tis criminal, 'tis contrary to what both Faith and Reason require of you, and yet are weak enough to yield to the Temptation? I fear we shall find a great Number of these.

There is nothing that set the Effect of this Sacrament, in those first Preachers of the Christian Faith, in a stronger Light, than their undaunted Courage, ardent Zeal and Fervour in promoting the  
Glory



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Glory of God, and the Salvation of their Neighbour, as also their suffering, with a spiritual Joy, all the Insults and Affronts offer'd by the *Jews*, on Account of their Religion, and Faith in *Christ*. They practis'd that important Lesson, which the Apostle *St. James* gives all the Faithful: *Look upon it*, says he, (C. xii.) *a Subject of Joy, when you enter into various Trials and Persecutions.* *St. Peter* likewise says, (1 Ep. C. iv.) *Let none of you suffer as a Murderer, or a Thief, or a Detractor; but if it be your Lot to suffer for being a Christian, do not be asham'd, but glorify God upon that Account.* You'll say, no doubt, that these are proper Examples for Pastors, and such as are call'd to the Apostolic Functions: 'Tis very true; but you must not imagine, that there is nothing herein for you to imitate, because not called by God to his sacred Ministry. Their Zeal teaches you, what you ought to do in Defence of the Faith they preached, remembring, that if you are asham'd of *Christ* and his Doctrine, he will disown you before the Face of his Father. You are not, 'tis true, called to the Priesthood, nor oblig'd to labour in preaching the Gospel, and administering the Sacraments: but you must remember, you have no small Obligation of earnestly promoting the Conversion of your Neighbours, by a zealous and edifying Life. Happy then, and thrice happy too, are all those, whose Lives contribute to the Conversion of a Sinner; for, as *St. James* says, (C. v. 26.) *he who shall convert a Sinner from his evil Ways, shall save his Soul from Death, and cover a Multitude of Sins.* And on the contrary, miserable are they who induce others to Sin, either by Words or Example: Such Persons, shall not only answer for the Souls of those they pervert, but for the Blood of *Christ* which they cause to be shed in vain.

But to proceed; Another Effect of this Sacrament, is a Character; which is in the Nature of a Com-  

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mission,

mission, or spiritual Power, conferr'd upon us, to fight the Cause of God and Religion. And as the Character of a Christian, which we receive in Baptism, cannot be lost, or taken from us, as being given immediately by God; so neither can we be deprived of the Character of a compleat Christian, or Soldier of Christ: and by Consequence neither of these Sacraments can be repeated, or administer'd twice to the same Person, without Injury to him, from whom they received their Power.

In order that you may know how necessary the Sacrament of Confirmation is, you must first compare it with other Sacraments; some whereof are necessary to the Church in general, others to particular Persons only. For Instance, Baptism is necessary for every individual Person, for the Remission of Original Sin. Penance, or Repentance, is necessary for all who are guilty of Actual Sin; this Necessity is called *absolute*, and will not admit of any Excuse or Dispensation in any Circumstance whatever. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, are also necessary for all Persons, both by the Law of God, and the Church; yet not so necessary, but that Salvation may be obtained without them, where there is not a wilful Neglect. The Sacraments of Order and Matrimony are not necessary for every individual Person, but only to certain Stations, *viz.* for those who engage in Ecclesiastical Functions, and those who are disposed to enter the married State.

From these Considerations you may be inform'd, in what Manner the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary, *viz.* by a divine Precept, and the Laws of the Church; in the same Manner as the Blessed Eucharist, and Extreme Unction are necessary. For certainly our blessed Saviour did not institute a Sacrament for the Benefit of the whole Church, and at the same Time leave Persons at their Liberty, whether they would make use of it or not. Besides,

as every Sacrament has a peculiar Grace annexed to it, which cannot be obtain'd by any other Channel; and 'tis a criminal Presumption, to expect that Effect by any other Means, than what *Christ* has ordained for that Purpose: The Grace of making us perfect Christians, and a strengthening Grace to bear up with Courage against Persecution, cannot be particularly ascribed to any other Ceremony, or Sacrament, besides Confirmation.

Hence it is, that in the primitive Ages, when the Heathenish Persecution raged against the Christians, and that the Bishops were either put to Death, imprison'd, or sent into Banishment; great Lamentation was made among the Faithful, not only for want of the good Example and Instructions they received from the Bishops, but most especially, they deplored the Absence of those Persons, who were wont to administer unto them the Sacrament of Confirmation, whereby they might be encouraged and strengthened, against the rigorous Persecutions they were daily exposed to. It was upon this Account, that Care was taken to have little Children confirmed immediately after Baptism, lest afterwards they might not have an Opportunity, in those perilous Times. This Circumstance ought to be consider'd by all those, who live in a Country where the Catholick Faith is not only discouraged, but the Professors may be expos'd to the most rigorous Persecutions, when their Enemies are disposed to let the Penal Laws loose against them. It has often been the Case, even in our Memory, and may be again, tho' we are very easy under the present Government, whose Lenity all Catholicks ought gratefully to acknowledge. But among other Things, which have occasion'd a Defection of many from the Church, the want of Respect, and the not having Recourse to the Sacrament of Confirmation, may be mentioned, as one of the Devil's Stratagems to lessen the Number of the Faithful. For how can you expect to avoid the Evil,  
without

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without making Use of the Means to prevent it? or bear up against Persecution, who willingly reject the Grace that is ordained to support you on that Occasion? Wherefore all Parents, and Masters of Families, ought to take Care and see, that their Children and Servants are confirmed by a Bishop, so that they may become perfect Christians.

You know that in natural Things, certain Dispositions are required in the Subject, before the Agent can produce its Effect; so we cannot receive the Benefit intended by the Sacraments, without due Preparation. In relation to the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is in the first Place required, that a Person be baptized; for without Baptism, you are not Members of *Christ's* Church, nor in a Capacity of receiving any Nourishment from the rest of the Sacraments, unless you are united to *Christ's* Mystical Body; For a Tree can communicate no Nourishment to those Branches which are cut off, or otherwise not united to it.

A second Thing required, is the State of Grace, without which, no one can worthily receive this Sacrament; and in order to this, every one that is admitted, ought to confess their Sins, with a true sorrow for having offended God. This Obligation includes all those who are arrived at the perfect Use of Reason, so as to be able to distinguish between Good and Evil; and tho' seven Years of Age is the Time usually mentioned, yet there being a great Difference in the natural Capacities of Children, a Judgment is to be formed of them, not so much from their Years, as the Tokens they give of their Fitness and Sufficiency. Formerly indeed, this Sacrament was conferr'd on Infants, before they arrived at the Use of Reason; upon which Occasion, these Preparations I have mentioned, were not requisite; but this Practice being partly laid aside, or at least not made use of, without consulting the Prelates of the Church; 'tis left to them to determine, what  
Necessity



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Necessity there may be of following it, they being the only Judges of the Case.

Let me put you in Mind once more, that in case you have not preserved your Baptismal Innocence, to endeavour to repair it by a serious Repentance, and a real Amendment, before you approach to this Sacrament; for *the Spirit of Wisdom*, says the wise Man, *will not enter into a Soul ill disposed, nor dwell in a Body defiled with Sin*; no, dear Christians, this spotless Dove cannot set his Foot in any Place defiled with Filth.

Another Disposition is, that you must be at Peace, and in Charity with every one; for the Holy Ghost, as the Apostle assures us, is the Spirit of Peace, and not of Dissention. Again, you must quit your Affections to this World; for the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the World, can never dwell together. The World, it may be, would be willing enough to accommodate itself with the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God can never agree with the World. The World is nothing but Corruption and Malice; the Spirit of God, is nothing but Sanctity and Goodness: The World is full of Dissention and Quarrels; the Spirit of God breathes nothing but Meekness and Patience. The World teaches nothing but Pride and Vanity, the Spirit of God inspires nothing but Humility and Modesty.

You see now, dear Christians, that in order to receive the Holy Ghost; you must separate yourselves, if not from the World, at least from the Spirit of the World; you must separate yourselves from its evil Maxims, its dangerous Pleasures, its contagious Follies, and its pernicious Engagements; these are inconsistent with the Spirit of God.

Lastly, you must imitate the Apostles, who employed themselves in earnest Prayer, before they received the Holy Ghost; and knowing the difficult Charge they had upon their Hands, the Preaching the Gospel, and the Conversion of the World, from all

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all its evil Ways, and yet so natural to Flesh and Blood; and knowing their own Insufficiency for so great a Work, they made pressing Instances to Heaven, from whence their Assistance must come.

Were you but as sensible of your own Wants, you would be as fervent in your Prayers; did you but see the Strength of your Passions, and their Danger; did you but see the Snares of the Devil, that lies in wait for you; had you but a just Sense of the Corruption of the World; and how easy you are drawn into it; you would importune Heaven for Succour and Help, with as much Instance as the Apostles did; you would beg, like them, for Light from Heaven to enlighten you in Time of Danger, and Grace to avoid the Occasions of it; you would beg, like them, for Patience to bear the Difficulties of human Life, and to submit to those Trials, which are the Appointments of Heaven, with a Resignation becoming a Christian. You know Almighty God is good, and will not be wanting to assist you, if you refuse not to ask it, as you ought; he will send his divine Spirit upon you, loaded with Blessings; viz. Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and the Fear of our Lord, which are his Gifts. Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Longanimity, Goodness, Benignity, Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency, and Chastity, are the Fruits he leaves behind him.

- If you receive not these Blessings, 'tis because your Hearts are engaged in the Interest of your Passions, and you ask not God in earnest. Think seriously on this great Misfortune, to be deprived of the divine Spirit, and the sad Consequences of it: Beg now at least this one Blessing, that this divine Spirit would, by his Light and Grace, change this Disorder, and move you so to desire his Presence here, that you may be happy in it for all Eternity.

## DISC. I.

On the SACRAMENT of the EUCHARIST.

Take and eat, this is my Body, which shall be delivered for you. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

AS there are seven Planets in the Heavens, from whose Virtue and Influence depends whatsoever is here upon Earth; and among these the Sun is as King, and he alone, by his own Nature and Essence, is clear and light, and the rest of the Planets receive their Light from him: So in like Manner, in the Church of God there are seven Sacraments, from whose Virtue, all the Safety of our Souls depend in this Life. But the Blessed Eucharist is the King of all the rest, and it alone comprehends in itself the sole Author of Grace, and from whence the rest have their Virtue communicated to them.

But alas! there are Numbers who endeavour to obscure, and extinguish this Light; which heretofore holy *Simeon* prophesied of the Infant *Jesus*, saying, (Luke ii. 34.) *Behold this Child is set for the Ruin, and Resurrection of many, and for a Sign which shall be contradicted.* This we see now a-days fulfilled, in the Use of the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; for it is put for the *Resurrection of many*, viz. of those who firmly believe, that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is contained truly and really, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ: And for a Sign which shall be contradicted, to all those, who deny that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is the Body and Blood of Christ; such are the *Calvinists*; and others, who do not believe, that the Body and Blood of Christ are contained in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, under the Species or Appearance of Bread and Wine; but that it is only a bare empty Sign of Christ's Body. The *Lutherans* and others, although

although they believe that the Body and Blood of *Christ* are contained in the blessed Sacrament, nevertheless they say it is there, together with the Bread and Wine; so that they don't believe, that the Substance of Bread and Wine is changed, or converted into the Body and Blood of *Christ*. But the Faith of the Catholick Church is, that in the holy Eucharist is contained, truly and really; verily and indeed, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of *Christ*, viz. that very same Body which was born of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, that very same Body which was crucified upon the Cross, that very same Body which is now in Heaven, at the Right-hand of the Father. Moreover our Faith is, that by the Words spoken by the Mouth of a Priest at Mass, who holds the Place of God, that the Bread, in a Moment, is changed and transubstantiated into the Body of *Christ*, and the Wine into his precious Blood; and that under either Species, a true, solid, living, and animated Body, joined always to the Divinity, is contained.

This we are taught from the Types and Figures of the Old Testament; this the Prophets also foretold; this St. *Paul* and all the Evangelists teach us; and this all the Doctors of the Church, in all Ages, constantly affirm.

What therefore I intend in this Discourse, is, *first*, To prove to you the Truth of the real Presence, from the Figures and Prophecies of the Old Testament, as also from the Epistle of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*. And, *secondly*, That the Belief of the real Presence, or Transubstantiation, is no ways contrary to Sense or Reason.

That the Figures of the old Law do represent the Eucharist, is manifest; for Manna was an excellent Figure of the Eucharist, wherewith God fed his People in the Desert; which in the Scripture is called the Bread of Angels, Bread from Heaven, and heavenly Bread. Therefore the Eucharist ought to be a Thing most excellent and singular; for the Thing



Thing figured ought to be more noble than the Figure or Image; as for Example, the Person of a King is more worthy than the Figure or Image which represents him.

- Another Figure of the Eucharist was the Paschal Lamb; which, after it was offered and slain, was eaten with certain Ceremonies, by the Hebrews, as we read in *Exodus*, (C. xii.) which signified, that Christ would offer himself, and afterwards give himself to be eaten; as when he said to his Apostles, at his last Supper, (Matth. xxvi. 26.) *Take and eat, for this is my Body.*

But the Sacrament of the Eucharist was not only prefigured by Types, but was also foretold by the Prophets. And first, the Royal Prophet *David*, who foreseeing in Spirit, how excellent Food the Son of God would give to the Children of the new Law, rejoiced in Heart, and sung forth, (Psal. xxii. 5.) *Thou hast prepared, and set before me a Table (to strengthen me) against those who persecute me.* The Prophet speaks not here of a corporal Banquet or Table, because that driveth not away from us spiritual Enemies, that afflict us, but rather inviteth them; as he speaks, says St. *Cyril*, of the mystical and fe-giving Table of the holy Altar, which truly drives away the spiritual Enemy, who afflicts and oppresses us. Again, the same holy *David* says, (Psal. cx. 4.) *Our merciful Lord has made a Memory of his marvellous Works, he has prepared Sustenance for all who fear him.* He has instituted a Memorial, not of this, that wonderful Work, but of all his wonderful and admirable Works. But what has he done? He has prepared Food, says holy *David*, for all those who fear him. He speaks not here of corporal Food, because he gives that even to his Enemies; both to Jews, Turks, Infidels, and the like. But the holy Eucharist, is as a short Compendium of all the Miracles of God; for in this Sacrament is seen all the wonderful Things of God, viz. a Body in many Places

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Places at once, and yet possessing no Place; a Body without Extension of Parts, impassible, not to be divided, without Diminution: In fine, a Body spiritual and divine. Here do Catholicks believe Accidents to subsist without their Subject, Quantity without Matter, Colour without Substance. Here Divines acknowledge an admirable Action, a miraculous Transubstantiation or Change, which is as much to be admired as the very Creation of the World. They here believe one Substance to be changed into another, without Corruption or Generation. Therefore truly did the Prophet say, (Psal. cx.) *Our merciful Lord has made a Memory of his marvellous Works.*

If we add to these Figures and Prophecies, the Authority of the New Testament, it will appear most certain, that *Christ* at his last Supper gave to his Apostles, not the bare Figure or Sign of his Body, but his true, real, and proper Body. For St. Paul declares, that *Christ* at his last Supper spoke these Words (1 Cor. xi.), *Take and eat, for this is my Body, which shall be delivered for you.* And the Evangelists, although they wrote at different Times and Places, they wrote the same Thing, to the same Purpose, and in the same Words; nor was there any one of them, who in this Institution made use of the Word, it signifies, or represents my Body. The Apostles understood the Words of our Saviour in a plain and literal Sense; and thus the Jews understood him, when they cried out, *How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat,* (Joh. vi. 51.) If he had spoken only in a figurative Sense, it had been easy to have told them so; for in other Matters, of much less Importance, it was his usual Custom to expound his Meaning, as St. Mark assures us (C. iv. 34.); but none of the Apostles complain'd of the Obscurity of his Words, for they very well remembered what *Christ* had said to them before (Joh. vi. 51.); *The Bread which I will give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* Moreover they observed

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served that *Christ* said (Matth. xxvi. 28.), *This is my Blood of the New Testament*: By which Words he signified, that he would leave them his Body and Blood, as a Legacy in his last Will or Testament, to feed and nourish our Souls, and as a perpetual Monument of his Affection. Now the Words of a Will or Testament ought to be understood in their proper Sense, as the Words themselves sound; for if human Testaments, or last Wills, are to be understood in their proper literal Sense as human Laws teach us they are, how much more did the Apostles understand the Testament of *Christ* in its proper Sense? If a Prince, for Example, before his Death, should make his Last Will or Testament, wherein he left to such a Nobleman such a Castle, with all the Lands and Tenements belonging to it, and to each of his Servants one Thousand Pound apiece: Now, if after his Death, his Heirs should wrest, or turn the Words of the Testator to a figurative Sense, surely, this would have no Effect with any Judge. For if they should say, the Prince left a Castle, with all its Farms and Lands, not in Substance, but in Figure only, viz. a Picture, or painted Castle and Lands; and to his Servants, he left so much painted Money: I am confident those Persons would be esteemed very wicked Men who should dream of such Evasions; and would be condemned for their Injustice, in every Court of Judicature throughout the World.

And let me tell you this, this is the very Case of our Adversaries, who say, that *Christ* did not give us his Body and Blood, but only the Figure, or Sign of his Body: But alas! what is this, but to mock and sport with the Word of God? For St. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians* (C. lxi. 27.), proves plainly, that *Christ* did not give to his Apostles a bare Sign or Figure of his Body, but his true and real Body; for he assures us, that *whosoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord.* There-  
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fore, that this Argument of St. Paul may have its full Force, we must understand by the Body and Blood of *Christ*, not the Figure of them, but that very same Body which the *Jews* crucified, and the self-same Blood which they wickedly shed. And surely no one will deny, or call in Question, but that it was his true and real Body, that was delivered, and his real Blood, that was shed; and if so, by Consequence it must be his true and real Body and Blood, which he gave to his Apostles; for we have the same Authority for one, as for the other.

I cannot forbear admiring the Weakness of some of our Adversaries, who pretend that *Christ* is not really present in the Sacrament, because St. Paul says, As often as you celebrate the holy Mysteries, you must do it in Remembrance of *Christ*. What! is it then improper to recommend the Remembrance of what is present? Can any thing be more really and intimately present to every one than God? *He is not far from every one of us*, says St. Paul (Acts xvii. 27.) and yet with how much Reason does *Solomon*, in the last Chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, call upon every one to remember his Creator in the Days of his Youth? The Reason of this is, because what falls not under the Senses, may easily be forgotten, and therefore the Remembrance of it is recommended. Besides, you must take notice, that what you are chiefly to remember is the Death and Passion of *Christ*, as we learn from S. Paul, (Cor. xi. 26.) the Remembrance of which is evidently no ways inconsistent with *Christ's* real Presence in the Sacrament; *You shall shew the Death of our Lord until he come.*

Before I proceed any farther, to prove the Truth or Verity of the real Presence of *Christ's* precious Body and Blood in the holy Eucharist, it will not be amiss to prove, that this Belief of ours is no ways contrary to Sense or Reason.

One Motive why our Adversaries think that their Senses are imposed upon, is a false Persuasion; because



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cause they imagine, that when they see the Sacrament, they are to believe that the outward Form, the Surface, and the Qualities which they see, touch, or taste, to be the true Body and Blood of *Christ*. If this were so, then indeed they would have Reason to cry out, and say, their Senses were contradicted: But if they would but reflect, that all this outward Form, the Surface, and the Qualities, which we see, feel, or taste, are really, in all respects, the very same as they are represented to our Senses, and that no Catholick believes them to be the true Body and Blood of *Christ*, but only the Veil which shrouds it, or hides it from our Senses: That when we fall down on our Knees, to adore our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, whom we firmly believe to be really and substantially present, by a Miracle imperceptible to all our Senses, we do not adore the Veil which shrouds or hides him from us, we only adore the God of our Salvation, who in the Mystery of his Incarnation hid his Divinity in Flesh; and in the Mystery of Transubstantiation hides his Flesh and Blood, under the Forms or Appearances of Bread and Wine. If People would but seriously reflect, that what they perceive by any of their Senses, is really and truly the same as they perceive, viz. That the exterior Form of Bread and Wine are truly there, tho' not the inward Substance of Bread and Wine; that Faith does not oblige them to believe the contrary, but only to believe that under these outward Forms the Body and Blood of *Christ* are hid and concealed from all our Senses: Then they would easily conclude, that Transubstantiation is not contrary to Sense. For yet must observe, that our Senses only perceive the outward Appearances of their Objects, and that our Understanding is the only Faculty which can discern the inward Substance. The naked Substance of a Body cannot be perceived by any Sense, because it has no Dimension, Figure or Colour, nor any other Modifications which affect our Senses.

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Now I must needs acknowledge, that if when we receive the blessed Sacrament, we saw it white, and yet believed it black; if we felt it rough, and yet believed it smooth; if we tasted Sweetness, and yet believed it bitter; then no Man could deny, but that our Faith taught us Things evidently contrary to what our Senses tell us. But as the Case stands with us in this Article, I cannot see how any thing but invincible Ignorance can possibly excuse all those who charge us with the ridiculous Absurdity of contradicting all our Senses; when at the same Time, we believe all that our Senses represent unto us.

But 'tis objected, that after Consecration we see the Substance of Bread, and we believe the Substance is not there; is not this, say they, contradicting our Senses? I grant, that after Consecration we see the Substance, as plainly as we did before; but I absolutely deny, that any Man ever saw the Substance of Bread, either before or after Consecration; for as I said before, all that is perceptible to the Senses, is only the Accidents or Appearances of Bread and Wine, and this remains the same after Consecration as before, so that the Senses are not at all deceived.

If we believed, that Transubstantiation was a sensible Change, that is to say, a Change of any thing that is *sensible*, in the Bread and Wine, then indeed our Senses might easily give Evidence against our Faith, as being Judges of sensible Things: They might depose that nothing sensible is changed, but that all Things sensible remain the same as formerly they were; and no Man could deny, but that our Faith would then contradict our Senses. But on the contrary, if we do not believe that *Transubstantiation* is a sensible Change, then 'tis certain, our Senses not being Judges of insensible Things, cannot give Evidence against us.

But some will perhaps say, That the Substance of Bread and Wine are sensible Things. To which I answer, That if by Substance they mean something  
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that is sensible, the Catholick Church does not mean the same; so that they mean one sort of Substance, and the Church another: For the Catholick Church, by the Substance, which she believes to be changed in the Sacrament, does not understand any thing that is sensible in the Bread and Wine; and therefore all their Arguments, from Evidence of Sense, are levelled against a chimerical Transubstantiation of their own Invention, and not against that which the Church has defined in the Council of Trent.

Again: 'Tis objected that the Mystery of Transubstantiation seems impossible. It seems impossible, say they, *first*, for the Body of *Christ* to be confin'd within so small a Compass; *secondly*, for one Body to be at the same Time in two Places.

'Tis strange, dear Christians, to see, when once Peoples Minds are prepossessed with an Aversion for any Doctrine, how blind they are in their Enquiries, how partial and unequal in their Judgments. They easily believe the *Incarnation* of *Christ*; and the Reason is, because it is an Article which they are willing to believe; so they make no doubt, but Almighty God's Goodness, Infinity, Immensity, may be lodged within the Compass of a Man; and that this Man, who lived and died amongst us, is the great Creator and Conserver of the Universe. Why have they not the Assurance to ridicule this Mystery, and say 'tis evidently contrary to Reason, as the Enemies of *Christ*'s Divinity do? Why do they not tell the World, that it involves a clear Contradiction, to imagine Infinity measured, Incomprehensibility comprehended, and Immensity contained within the Compass of a Man? The Reason is, because they like this Article well enough, their Education has not armed them against it. How comes it then, that in an Age so sceptical, or incredulous in all Things else, they are so positive, and so dogmatical in this Point of the Incarnation, at the same Time

they cry out, 'tis impossible for the Body of *Christ* to shrink into the Compass of a little Bit of Bread, or to be in several Places at one and the same Time? They can believe three Persons, really distinguished, in one divine Nature, and one Person in two Natures, and yet they cannot believe one Body in two Places. Is not this *straining* at the lesser Difficulty, and swallowing the greater? And had not our Saviour Reason to complain (Matth. xxiii. 24.) of the *blind Guides, who strain at a Gnat and swallow a Camel*?

Now, if in the Mystery of the Incarnation and the blessed Trinity, our Adversaries allow, that it is no Argument of Weakness, but of Wisdom, to submit our Judgments; why is it not so in the Mystery of Transubstantiation? For if they tell me, that the Nature of God and the Divine Persons, are Objects so spiritual, and so much out of our reach, that it does not become us to dogmatize in Matters belonging to them: Let me ask then, What Knowledge they can have of a Body divested of all its natural Dimensions, and exalted to the Condition of a spiritual Body? And it is in this Manner of Being, that *Christ's* Body is in the Eucharist; for we don't apprehend *Christ's* Body to be in the Sacrament, after that gross, carnal and corporal Manner, as when he was living upon Earth. To conceive this aright, it must be observed what St. Paul says, (1 Cor. xv. 42.) That there are two very different Manners of Being, proper to a human Body, according to its different States; for it may be either corruptible or incorruptible, mortal or immortal, natural or spiritual. Thus St. Paul, discoursing of the Manner in which our Bodies shall be at the Resurrection, says, (1 Cor. v. 53.) That then this corruptible Body shall put on Incorruption, and this mortal Body shall put on Immortality; and 'tis sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body: So that there is a natural Body, and there is a spiritual Body.



And tho' it be not possible to imagine how a human Body, when it is in its corruptible, mortal, and natural Manner of Being, that is, so extended and gross as here it is, can be truly and really contained under the Form of a Bit of Bread: Yet when this same Body has put on its other, more perfect Manner of Being, and is now become incorruptible, immortal, and even spiritual, there is not then that Difficulty of comprehending it; because being now become in its Qualities like a Spirit, and as a Spirit requires no Extension or Greatness of Place for its Being, so neither does a Body when it is become spiritual. As therefore it may be easily conceived how a Spirit may be really under the Compass of a Wafer; so likewise may it be understood of *Christ's* Body, which is not imagined to be in the Sacrament in its corporal and natural Manner of Being, but as it is incorruptible, immortal, and a spiritual Body: And notwithstanding all this, 'tis his true and real Body, the very same that was born of the Virgin *Mary*, the same that was crucified upon the Cross, and the same that is now in Heaven; I say, the same in Substance, but different as to its Manner of Being; for I am confident no one will pretend to say, that the Body of *Christ* which is now in Heaven, is not the same in Substance that was born of the Virgin *Mary*, and which died upon a Cross, tho' it is now become glorified, incorruptible, immortal, and even spiritual. Under this Consideration several other Difficulties may be resolved. And thus it may be easily conceived how it may be in many Places at once: For tho' we cannot easily understand this possible to an extended Body, and in its corporal Manner of Being, yet there is no such Difficulty in Relation to a spiritual Body, because a Spirit has no Dependence on Place; and 'tis evident, that without local Extension, a Body is neither confined by being in one Place, nor divided by being in two.

In fine, as the Council of *Trent* teaches, *Christ* is not present in the *Eucharist* according to his natural Way of Being; so that he is there in a miraculous Manner: And it must be owned that God, by his Power, can do that with a Body which is above the Nature of a Body to do; and what is done by the Power of God above Nature, is not to be tried by the Laws of Nature; nor are we to search for Examples of the same Thing in Nature, which is done by the Power of God above Nature. And is it not agreeable to Faith, to believe that God may do some wonderful Things with the Body of *Christ*, which is united to a divine Person? To be in many Places at once; to be visible at the Right Hand of his Father in Heaven, and to be invisibly upon our Altars at the same Time, is one of those Miracles which *Christ* does with his Body.

Is it not highly reasonable then, that in the blessed *Eucharist*, which the Scripture informs us to be the Subject of a miraculous Power, we should not only enquire what the Eyes see and Mouth tastes, but likewise what the Word of God declares it to be; and so rather form our Judgment of what we thus hear from God, than from seeing and tasting, since our Senses are frequently liable to Mistakes? Was not *Mary Magdalene* deceived (*Mark* xvi. 5.) when her Eyes told her it was a young Man she saw at the Door of the Sepulchre? and her Ears, from what she heard him speak? and after all this Information of her Senses, *St. Matthew* assures us, (*C.* xxxviii.) it was not a young Man but an Angel in the Likeness of a young Man. The same Difficulty may be made in the *Dove* seen over *Christ* at his Baptism, and the fiery Tongues over the Apostles at *Pentecost*; but the Scripture assures us it was the *Holy Ghost*; and therefore we believe it upon the Revelation of God, notwithstanding all the Information of Sense to the contrary. For to let our Faith be directed by what we see, rather than by what we hear from God, is con-

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trary to Reason; because our Senses may deceive us, but God cannot.

Thus, dear Christians, having given you some Light to those Difficulties, which are the common Grounds, from whence arise all the Doubts and Disbelief concerning this Mystery, I hope it may be an Encouragement to Reason and Sense to submit to this divine Truth; and consequently full of Admiration of God's Goodness and Mercy, cry out with St. Peter, (1 Ep. ii. 9.) *Let us shew forth the Praises of him who called us out of Darkness into his wonderful Light; which guides us through this Vale of Misery to the everlasting Joys of Heaven.*

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## DISC. II.

On the SACRAMENT of the EUCHARIST.

*Take and eat, this is my Body.* Matth. xxvi. 26.

HAVING in the foregoing Discourse shewed you, both from the Figures and Prophecies of the Old Testament, as also from St. Paul, what it was that *Christ* left his Church in the holy Eucharist, viz. not a Figure of his Body, but his true and real Body: I likewise shewed you, that the Belief of Transubstantiation is not at all contrary to Sense or Reason.

What therefore I intend in this Discourse, is, first to shew from the clear Text of the Evangelists and secondly from the unanimous Consent of the primitive Fathers and Doctors of the Catholick Church, that the Body and Blood of *Christ* are truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharist.

'Tis now about two hundred Years, or little more, since those who pretended to reform the Church of *Christ* began to quarrel with her Faith concerning the Mystery of the holy Eucharist; and the Disputes then broached have continued ever since. The

Catholick Church believes, that in this Mystery, after the Words of Consecration, are truly, really, and substantially present, the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of *Christ*, under the outward Form or Appearance of Bread and Wine, and that by Virtue of these Holy Words of Consecration, is made a true and real Transubstantiation, or Change of one Substance into another.

The Adversaries of the Catholick Church pretend that *Christ's* Body and Blood are not truly and really present in their own Substance in the Sacrament, but by Faith only, and in Figure; or according to some, if it be there, it is accompanied with the Substance of Bread. Now both Sides appeal to Scripture; both Sides profess themselves ready to stand to what is there determined. Let us see then which Side the Scripture favours, whether the Church affirming the Eucharist to be the true Body and Blood of *Christ*, or her Adversaries, denying it to be his real Body and Blood.

The Institution of the blessed Sacrament is related in three different Evangelists, viz. by St. *Matthew* (C. xxvi. 26.) by St. *Mark*, (C. xiv) and by St. *Luke*, (C. xxii.) Here, dear Christians, we may expect to find something decisive in this Point. Observe what it was that our Saviour instituted, and gave to his Apostles at that Time; for the Sacrament which the Faithful receive at this Day, is the same which then the Apostles received, as both Catholicks and their Adversaries allow. In the 26th of St. *Matthew* we read thus; *Whilst they were at Supper, Jesus took Bread, blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, (observe his Words) Take you and eat, THIS IS MY BODY: And taking the Chalice, he gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of this, FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS.* St. *Mark*, in his fourteenth Chapter, relates these Words, as spoken  
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by our Saviour; *This is my Body, this is my Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many.* Much the same are the Words of the Institution, as they are recorded in the twenty-second of St. Luke; *This is my Body which is given for you, do this for a Commemoration of me: This is the Chalice of the New Testament in my Blood, which shall be shed for you.* And St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (C. xi.) says much the same.

Now dear Christians, I appeal to any impartial Judge, which Side the Scripture is on. Tho' our Adversaries have the Confidence to assert that Transubstantiation is repugnant to the plain Words of holy Scripture; whereas nothing can be better proved by holy Writ; for the Scripture in no less than four different Places, relates the Words of *Christ* to be, *This is my Body, this is my Blood, or, This is the Chalice of the New Testament in my Blood.* What can be more expressive and plain? particularly since he adds, that it was *that Body* which should be delivered for them, and *that Blood* which should be shed for many to the Remission of Sins. Now give me leave to ask, Was it not his true and real Body which was delivered to die on a Cross? Was it not his true and real Blood which was shed for the Remission of Sins? It most certainly was; and yet he says plainly, *this is that Body, and this is that Blood* which he gives them.

Surely our Adversaries cannot but see, that if our Saviour intended to change Bread and Wine into his Body and Blood, as we firmly believe he did, he could not have expressed himself in more plain Terms, than by positively and directly telling us, *This is my Body which shall be delivered for you, this is my Blood which shall be shed for many.* And if our Saviour had designed to give only an empty Figure, excluding the Reality of his Body and Blood, this Manner of expressing himself would be exceeding obscure and absurd, as I shall shew in the Sequel of this Discourse.

That this Expression is very obscure, if our Adversaries Explanation be admitted, is sufficiently proved from the Effect it has had, since all the Christian Churches throughout the World, for many Ages, have been induced to believe the very contrary to what our Adversaries now assert; for they have constantly believed these Words, to import not a figurative, but the real Presence of his *Body* and *Blood* in this august and adorable Sacrament. 'Tis indeed remarkable thro' the whole Series of the Gospel, that when our Saviour spoke any thing obscure in Parables, he carefully explain'd it to his Apostles; and this St. Mark assures us, (C. iv. 34) that *when they were alone he explained all Things to his Disciples.* But at the Institution of the blessed Sacrament, every Circumstance required that he should express himself in the most intelligible Terms: For when is it that all prudent Men endeavour to explain themselves in the most plain, easy, and intelligible Manner? Is it not when they are giving their Commands of great Consequence? Is it not when they are treating with, and taking their Leave of their dearest Friends? Is it not when they are making their last Will and Testament? Yet all these Circumstances concur in the Institution of this Sacrament. He commands that clean Oblation, which the Prophet *Malachi* had foretold should be offered to God in all Places: *Do you this*, says our Saviour, (Luke xxii.) *in Remembrance of me.* He institutes a Sacrament, the Use of which was to be daily and perpetually in his Church; he leaves his Friends (*I will not now call you Servants but Friends*) (John xv. 15), whom he had appointed to teach all Nations his Gospel, and all Christian Truths. In a Word, he was settling a Treaty, a Covenant, an Alliance, which was to last to the End of the World: Could any Circumstances be imagined in which a Person ought more necessarily to speak plain and intelligible? No certainly.

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But to give these Words of our Saviour, instituting the blessed Sacrament, their full Force, and set them in their true Light; you must observe, that when he designed to confer any very singular Favour on his Church, he usually foretold, and promised it, that they might more easily believe when he conferred any Blessing. Thus he promised the Sacrament of Baptism, the Power of forgiving Sins: Thus he foretold his Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and sending of the Holy Ghost: Thus in fine, he foretold and promised this inestimable Benefit of the Holy Eucharist; his Words are these, in the sixth Chapter of St. John, (V. 52.) *The Bread which I will give is my Flesh, for the Life of the World.* The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, how can this Man give us his Flesh to eat? Then Jesus said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have Life in you. Whosoever eats my Flesh, and drinks my Blood, has Life everlasting, and I will raise him up at the last Day; for my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed: He that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, dwells in me, and I in him.* From these Words of the Jews, how can this Man give us his Flesh to eat? 'tis evident they understood our Saviour's Promise was to be fulfilled by really giving his Flesh and Blood; and our Saviour, far from mitigating his Words, asserts in more positive Terms, that except they eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they shall not have Life in them; and that his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed. These Words were spoken in the Presence of his Appostles; so that when he told them at his last Supper, *This is my Body which shall be given for you, this is my Blood which shall be shed for you;* they could not reasonably understand it in any other Sense than as he had promised, viz. that it was his real Flesh and Blood, which he had told both them and the Jews were Meat and Drink indeed.

Again: Would our Saviour, think you, who came to die for all Mankind, and who commanded all his Followers to avoid with all possible Care the least Scandal, would he, I say, if he had spoken only of a figurative eating and drinking his *Flesh* and *Blood*, have omitted to explain himself, when he saw, not only the *Jews*, but even some of his Disciples, so far shocked at his Promise, as to forsake him? No certainly. Yet all these Things were known to his Disciples and Apostles, and consequently they could not prudently understand our Saviour, at his last Supper, in any other Manner, than as giving his real Body and Blood under the Appearance of Bread and Wine.

'Tis in vain to pretend to elude any of these Texts, by telling me, 'tis usual in Scripture, and common Discourse, to give the *Sign* the Name of the *Thing* signified, for this only happens when the *Sign* naturally represents the *Thing* which you name; as for Example, when speaking of the King's Picture, you say this is the King; or in the Explanation of Parables, where every Thing spoken of is considered, as signifying some other: But when a Thing neither naturally represents another, nor is known to be used as the Representation of another; 'tis contrary to all Laws of Discourse, and highly absurd, to give it the Name of what you intended it to signify, without preparing the Minds of the Hearers. Now as for Bread, it has no natural Resemblance of *Christ's* Body, nor was ever used in human Speech, to signify *Christ's* Body: How then do you think, that *Christ* should be guilty of so great an Absurdity, as to call it his Body, if what he gave them was really Bread; and this at that Time, when every Circumstance required, that he should speak in the most easy, plain, and intelligible Manner?

Nor do these other Expressions of Scripture, *I am the Light*, *I am the Vine*, *I am the Door*, &c. justify the figurative Explanation of our Adversaries. When in the Eighth Chapter of St. *John* our Saviour says,

*I am*



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*I am the Light of the World*, he adds, *He that follows me shall have the Light of Life*: When in the Tenth, he says, *I am the Door*, he adds, *By me if any Man enter, he shall be saved*: When in the Fourteenth he says, *I am the Way*, he adds, *No Man comes to my Father but by me*: When in the Fifteenth he says, *I am the Vine*, he adds, *He that abides in me brings forth much Fruit*. Every Body sees clearly what kind of Light, Door, and Vine is meant. In like manner, when St. Paul says, (1 Cor. x. 4.) *The Rock was Christ*; his Meaning is obvious, for the whole Drift of his Discourse is to explain the Figures of the Old Testament. Hence in the Words immediately before that Text, he calls the Rock a spiritual Rock; and after having mentioned the *Israelites* passing the Red Sea, the Cloud, the Manna, the Water in the Desert, the Rock, he tells the *Corinthians* twice in the same Chapter, that all these Things happened (to the *Israelites*) in Figure, and are written for our Instruction. But as to the Words of *Christ*, instituting the blessed Sacrament, there is nothing to determine them to a figurative and metaphorical Sense; on the contrary, every Circumstance excludes that Explication, as I have already proved.

But perhaps some one will tell me, Supposing our Saviour be truly present in the Sacrament, what need of allowing Transubstantiation, or a Change of Bread and Wine into his Body and Blood? Why cannot his Words be understood literally enough, tho' he be said to give his Body and Blood in and with the Bread and Wine?

The Answer is very easy: For our Lord, in the Words of the Institution, did not say, *In this is my Body*; nor did he say, *Here is my Body, and here is my Blood*; as he should have said if he gave us his Body with the Bread; but he expressly said, *This is my Body*: Which Words could not be true, without a substantial Change of the Bread into his Body; since it cannot be truly said of Bread, remaining Bread, that it is the Body of *Christ*. As for Example,

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When our Saviour changed Water into Wine, at the Marriage of *Cana*, if he said, *This is Wine*, would it not have been evident, that these Words signified a substantial Change of what was in the Vessels, into Wine? And is not the present Case the same? Or if he intended to change Bread and Wine into his Body and Blood, how could he express his Intention plainer, than by saying, *This is my Body, this is my Blood?*

Again: our Adversaries object, that St. Paul calls the Sacrament, after Consecration, *Bread*, (1 Cor. xi.) whence they infer, the Scripture allows no Transubstantiation in the Sacrament.

This Argument will appear very weak, if you will observe these two Things. First, the Scripture, tho' it positively affirms the Change of the Substances, yet sometimes calls them by the Name they had before their substantial Change. Thus tho' the Waters were changed into Wine at *Cana*, yet the Evangelist calls it Water, made Wine, (John ii. 9.) Thus again, the Scripture tells us plainly, (Exod. ii.) that Aaron's and the Magicians Rods were changed into Snakes or Serpents, yet after the Change it calls them Rods; *Aaron's Rod devoured the Magicians Rods*. The second Thing which I would have you observe, is, that the Scripture frequently gives a Thing the Name of what it resembles. Thus because Angels appear'd in the Resemblance of Men, they are called Men, both in St. Mark, (Mark xvi.) and St. Luke (Luke xxiv) and many other Places. What Wonder then, if St. Paul calls the Sacrament *Bread*, since it bears the exterior Appearance of Bread, and was Bread before the omnipotent Hand of God changed it?

But now let us see the Sentiments of the primitive Fathers, and Doctors of the Church, on this Subject.

In the second Age, St. Ignatius Bishop of *Antioch*, a Disciple of the Apostles, who suffered Martyrdom about the Year 107, in his Epistle to the Christians of *Smyrna*, calls the Eucharist, 'The Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, which suffered for our Sins, and which

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‘which the Father raised by his Bounty.’ Thus this Disciple of the Apostles, who certainly knew the Meaning of their Doctrine.

In the same Age, St. *Justin* Martyr, in his Apology to the Heathen Emperor for the Christian Religion, affirms, ‘That as our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, ‘was himself by the Word made Flesh, and took ‘for our Salvation both Flesh and Blood; so we are ‘taught, that the Eucharist is the Flesh and Blood of ‘the same *Jesus incarnate*.’ (Apolog. 2. ad Antoninum.) Would any Man in his Senses write thus to a Heathen, if he understood *Christ’s* Words in a figurative Sense?

In the same Age St. *Iraeneus*, in his fifth Book against Heresies, speaking of the Bread and Wine, says, ‘That by the Word of God they are made the ‘Eucharist, which is the Body and Blood of *Christ*.’

In the third Age St. *Cyprian*, in his Sermon of the Lord’s Supper, says, ‘The Bread which our Lord ‘gave to his Disciples, being changed, not in Shape ‘but in Substance, by the Omnipotency of the ‘Word is made Flesh.’ He likewise says (Lib. de Orat. Donini.) That in the Eucharist ‘we eat *Christ’s* ‘Body, and drink his Blood.’

In the same Age, the learned *Origen* tells us (Hom. 7. in Levit.) That ‘in the old Law the Manna was a ‘figurative Food (in *Ænigmate*;) but now the Flesh ‘of God is Meat (in *Specie*) in Reality, as he himself says, *My Flesh is Meat indeed*.’ He speaks no less plain in many other Places.

In the same Age, *Tertullian* says (L. 4. cont. Marcion. C. 40.) ‘That the Bread which *Christ* took at ‘his last Supper, and distributed to his Disciples, ‘he changed into his Body.’

In the fourth Age, the great Saint *John Chrysostom* delivered in more clear Terms, the Doctrine of the Catholick Church. In his eighty-third Homily upon St. *Matthew*, he has these excellent Words: ‘Let ‘us every where believe Almighty God; nor con-

‘ tradict him, tho’ what he says seems contradictory  
 ‘ to our Reason and Sense. His Words cannot de-  
 ‘ ceive us, our Senses are easily deceived ; his Words  
 ‘ never err, our Senses are frequently mistaken. Since  
 ‘ therefore he says, This is my Body, let us be per-  
 ‘ suaded of it ; he who did these Things at his last  
 ‘ Supper, the same now performs them ; we are only  
 ‘ his Ministers, ’tis he who sanctifies, ’tis he who  
 ‘ transmutes or changes these Things.’ Thus far  
 St. *Chrysostom*, whose Words are equally plain in se-  
 veral Places of his excellent Works.

Let us now give Ear to St. *Ambrose*, another fa-  
 mous Doctor of Church, in the same Age, in his  
 Book *De his qui Mysteriis initiantur*, Chapter the  
 Ninth. ‘ Perhaps, you’ll say, says he, I see quite  
 ‘ another Thing : How do you assure me that I re-  
 ‘ ceive the Body of *Christ* ? And this is what re-  
 ‘ mains for us to prove. How great, says he, are  
 ‘ the Examples which we use to shew, that it is not  
 ‘ the Thing which Nature formed, but the Thing  
 ‘ which the Blessing has consecrated ; and that the  
 ‘ Blessing has greater Force than Nature, because  
 ‘ by the Blessing even Nature itself is changed.’  
 Afterwards he instances or makes mention of the  
 Change of Rods into Serpents, and of Water into  
 Blood ; and thus pursues his Discourse : ‘ If, says  
 ‘ he, the Words of *Elias* were powerful enough to  
 ‘ command Fire down from Heaven, shall not there-  
 ‘ fore the Words of *Christ* be able to change the  
 ‘ Nature of the Elements ? You have read of the  
 whole Creation, he said and they were made, he  
 ‘ commanded and they were created : The Word  
 ‘ therefore of *Christ*, which could make out of nothing  
 ‘ that which was not, cannot it change those Things  
 ‘ which are, into what they are not ?’ Thus St.  
*Ambrose*, not only proposing, but proving the Doc-  
 trine of the Catholick Church.

In the same Age St. *Gregory Nyssen*, in his Cate-  
 chistical Discourse, (Cap. 37.) professes the same  
 Faith.



Faith. 'I do believe, says he, that by the Word of God, the sanctified Bread is changed into the Body and Blood of *Christ*.'

In the same Age St. *Cyril*, Patriarch of *Hierusalem*, discourses thus of the Eucharist (Cat. Myf. 4.) 'Do not consider it, says he, as mere Bread and Wine, for now it is the Body and Blood of *Christ*, according to our Lord's own Words.' Again: 'Judge not the Thing, says he, by the Taste.'---And a little after, 'Knowing, says he, and holding for certain, that the Bread which we see, is not Bread, altho' it taste like Bread, but it is the Body of *Christ*.' What Catholick of this present Age, can express in plainer Terms, than this Saint has done, our Faith of Transubstantiation?

In the fifth Age, that great Doctor of the Church St. *Augustin*, in *Psal.* xxxiii. says, (Ps. xxxiii. Conc. 1.) 'How *David* could be carried in his own Hands, we know not, but in *Christ* we do, for he was carried in his own Hands, when at his last Supper he gave to his Disciples his own Body and Blood, saying, This is my Body; for he then carried his own Body in his own Hands.

Every one of these Fathers, dear Christians, which I have here quoted, lived above 1300 Years ago, and were certainly better qualified to know the Sense of the Scriptures and Doctrine of the Apostles, than those who came but lately into the World. And all the rest of the Fathers, in all succeeding Ages, unanimously agree in the same Doctrine; so that this Article of our Faith is as ancient as the Apostles.

I shall now conclude, by exhorting every one to remember the Days of old; consider the Years of many Generations, ask thy Elders and they will tell thee. Stand in the Ways, and see, and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein: For there is no other Way which can conduct you safely to the Joys of Heaven.

D I S C. III.

*On the SACRAMENT of the holy EUCHARIST.*

*He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever.*

St. John vi. 59.

**I**N the two last Discourses I proved to you, both from the Scriptures, the holy Fathers, and Doctors of the Church, the Truth of the real Presence of *Christ's* precious Body and Blood in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. What therefore I intend in this, is, *First*, To shew you that it is not necessary for the Laity to receive the Sacrament in both Kinds, or under both Species. And, *Secondly*, To lay before you the Effects or Benefits of this holy Sacrament.

The Adversaries, dear Christians of the Catholick Faith, accuse us with defrauding the Laity of the Cup; for they teach, that all Persons ought to receive the Sacrament under both Kinds, since *Christ* instituted it under both, gave it to his Apostles under both, and commanded them to consecrate it as he had done; and that it was the Practice of the primitive Church to receive it under both Kinds. Now the Doctrine of the Catholick Church is, that under either Kind alone, *Christ* is received whole and entire, and a true Sacrament.

Let us then examine what it was that *Christ* commanded at his last Supper. For if he commanded that all should receive under both Kinds, then all are bound so to do, and our Adversaries have Reason to cry out against us; but if *Christ* did not command it, then it is indifferent whether we receive it under one Kind only, or both.

*Christ* at his last Supper commanded his Apostles, saying (St. Luke xxii.) *Do this for a Commemoration*

*of*

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of me. By which Words *Christ* made his Apostles Priests, and gave them Power to consecrate his Body and Blood, as he had done, which cannot appertain to the Laity. Besides it is to be observed, that he said this after the Consecration of the Bread, before he had begun with the Chalice, as both *St. Luke* and *St. Paul* declare; and therefore if he commanded any thing concerning the Kinds or Species, in which we were to receive, it was of the Species of Bread that we should receive, and not of the Chalice, which as yet he had not begun to consecrate. But the Truth is, that he commanded nothing concerning the Receiving under one or both Kinds. For *St. Augustin* assures us, (*Epist. 108.*) that he left that to the Church to determine, and appoint as it should think fit, according to the various Conditions of Times, Places, Persons, and Circumstances, which might occur in the Church, provided that she alter nothing pertaining to the Nature or Essence of the Sacrament; and so the primitive Church always understood it. What therefore *Christ* commanded was, that his Apostles should consecrate, as he had done, and that they should give in Substance the same which he gave, but not that they were to give it with all the same Circumstances with which he gave it to them, as is manifest; for he gave it at Supper, and that to twelve only. Now the primitive Church did not give it after Supper, but in the Morning fasting; neither did they give it only to Bishops and Priests, who are the Apostles Successors, but to the Laity, Men, Women and Children. So that you see, the Substance only of that which *Christ* then did, was commanded by him to be done afterwards. But for all to receive under both Kinds, belongs only to the Circumstance of receiving, and therefore it is indifferent. And although the Eucharist is consecrated under both Kinds, and is then necessary that it be received by the Priest in both Kinds; yet it is not necessary that all

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the Laity should so receive it. For when *Christ* said (St. Matth. xxvi.) *Drink ye all of this*, he did not speak to the People, but only to the Apostles and their Successors; for you will find in the Gospel that there were no other present. *He sat down with the Twelve*, says St. Matthew, (C. xxvi. 20.) *He came with the Twelve*, says St. Mark, (C. xiv. 17.) *He sat down and the Twelve Apostles with him*, says St. Luke, (C. xxii. 14.)

If therefore our Adversaries will understand *Christ's* Words, *Do this in Commemoration of me*, as a Command for receiving under both Kinds; it must be a Command to some *distributively*, but not to the whole Collection or Congregation of the Church in *particular*; for, as I said before, he only spoke to the Apostles who were then present; so that it only appertains to them and their Successors. Just as when God commanded [Gen. i.], saying, *increase and multiply*, he did not command all to marry, but only that it be observed by some, in order to fulfil the Intent and End of Marriage. And therefore the Church has always appointed, that in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, [which is the publick Worship of God, and most special Imitation of the last Supper] the blessed Sacrament should be received under both Kinds, in Imitation of *Christ's* Action, and Performance of his Will, (for you must observe, that the Eucharist is both a Sacrifice and Sacrament, and in as much as it is a Sacrifice I have explained in the Decalogue, so that here I only speak of it as a Sacrament;) but that out of Mass, both Priests and People should receive under one, or both Kinds, according to Convenience of Times and Circumstances. And thus it was received by the People in the primitive Church, sometimes under one Kind only, and sometimes under both. For there is no Command in the whole Scripture for the People to receive the Communion in both Kinds. Even this the learned Bishop Montague, a zealous Protestant, was so sincere



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as to grant; 'Where does the Scripture, says he, (Tom. i. Originum, p. 396.) command, that the People should receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in both Kinds? There is no Scripture,' says he, for this; the Scriptures no where teach it.' The Protestants in *France*, are of Bishop *Montague's* Opinion: For in a Synod which they held at *Poitiers*, Anno 1560, they decreed, That receiving the Sacrament in both Kinds, is not so far commanded, but that for a considerable Reason, as to such who cannot drink Wine, or the like, it may be profitable and lawful to receive under the Species of Bread alone. Therefore, according to the Protestants Doctrine, the Laity's Communion under both Kinds is not of divine Precept; and so, by Consequence, it is lawful for them to communicate under one, or both Kinds, as the Church shall appoint.

Besides, if to communicate under one Kind only, be sufficient for the Laity's obtaining everlasting Life, then it is not necessary for them to communicate under both. Now our Saviour himself assures us in express Terms, that to communicate under one Kind only, is sufficient to gain everlasting Life, *He that eats this Bread shall live for ever*, says *Christ*, (St. John vi. 52.) And again, in the same Chapter, (V. 58.) he says, *If any one eats me, the same shall also live by me*. So that you see, eating alone, without drinking, will suffice.

Again: If *Christ* and his Disciples gave the Sacrament in one Kind, then it is lawful for us to give it in one Kind: Now it is thought from St. Luke, (C. xxiv. 30, 31.) that *Christ* gave the Sacrament of the holy Eucharist under the Form of Bread only, to two of his Disciples at *Emmaus*: His Words are these. *And it came to pass whilst he was at Table with them, he took Bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and reached it to them; and their Eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their Sight*. St. *Augustin* affirms, [L. iii. de Consens.

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senf. Evang. C. xxiii.] that it was not material Bread which our Saviour then gave his Disciples; for by Virtue, says he, of his Benediction, he changed it into his Body and Blood, and by that Action their Eyes were opened to know him. And several others of the holy Fathers understood these Words of St. *Luke* concerning the holy Eucharist, as Dr. *Pearson* affirms [in *An. Paul*, p. 34]

Now, as to his Disciples administering the Sacrament only in one Kind, we find from the *Acts* of the Apostles, [C. ii. 42.] where we read, that *they were persevering in the Doctrine of the Apostles, and the Communion of the breaking of Bread, and Prayer.* Again: In the 20th Chapter of the *Acts*, [V. 17.] *Upon the first Day of the Week when the Disciples came together to break Bread--*Here is no Cup in any of these Places; which are all expounded of the Sacrament by St. *Augustin*, [I. xlx. de Consens. Evang. C. xxv.] venerable *Bede*, and *Theophylact*, on the said Places.

Again: It appears from the Words of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, [1 Cor. xi. 27.] that the Apostles sometimes, either administered the Sacrament in one Kind only, or at least judged it sufficient to communicate in one Kind, if the Church should so command it: *Wherefore*, says St. *Paul*, *whoever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily*, [the Greek Word is  $\eta \pi \iota \nu \eta$ ] *shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord.* Hence, if an unworthy Communion, though under one Kind only, makes a Man guilty both of the Body and Blood of *Christ*; in like Manner in a worthy Communion, though only under one Kind, both the Body and Blood are received. But in order that the Protestant Reader might not understand this, the Translators of their Bible thought fit to corrupt the Text, which they have done in this Manner, by putting in *AND drink*, instead of *OR drink*, as it is in the Original. Thus, you see, our Adversaries are forced to corrupt the  
Word

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Word of God, in order to form an Argument from Scripture against us.

As to what our Adversaries [who believe the real Presence] object against us, out of the sixth Chapter of St. John, [V. 53.] where our Saviour says, *Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have Life in you*: I answer, that this imports a Command, obliging the whole Church, but not each particular Man, and so it is fulfilled by the whole Church, by Priests receiving in both Kinds, and by the Laity receiving in one; because under either Kind, we receive both the Body and Blood of Christ. It is not said, *unless every one eat*, &c. but *unless ye eat*, &c. So when Christ said, *Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, he did not command every particular Apostle to teach and baptize all Nations, but that it should be done amongst them, according to their several Allotments. So in the old Scripture we read, [Gen. xvii. 10.] *You shall circumcise the Flesh of your Foreskin*. And again, when God instituted the Paschal Lamb as a Sacrament and Sacrifice, he imposed two Precepts; the one, *Let every one take unto him a Lamb*, &c. [Exodus xii.] the other, *All the Multitude of the Children of Israel shall sacrifice it*. These were Precepts obliging the whole Synagogue, but not each particular Man. For every one was not bound to circumcise, but such only as were deputed for that Office: Nor was every one obliged to sacrifice the Lamb, but only the Father, or Chief of every Family; so this Objection proves nothing against us. And as to Protestants, this Objection does not sound well in their Mouths, because they pretend, that those Words of Christ were not spoken of the Sacrament, but only of Faith: But more particularly as they profess to receive neither the one or the other, but only Bread and Wine by way of Remembrance,

To

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To come now to the grand Objection of our Adversaries, who say, that we rob the Laity of the Blood of *Christ* by denying them the Cup. I answer, that this is a manifest Falshood; for both Faith and Reason tell us, that the living Body of *Christ* cannot be without his Blood, nor his living Blood without his Body; so that wheresoever *Christ's* Body is, there is also his Blood, for his Body and Blood cannot be divided, as being now immortal and impassible. *Christ being raised from the Dead*, says St. Paul, (Rom. vi. 9.) *dieth no more; Death has no more Power over him.* Hence the Faith of the Catholick Church is, that there is contained both the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of *Christ*, under either Kind or Species: Therefore it necessarily follows, that the Eucharist distributed under one Kind only, is not a lame, or imperfect Sacrament, since one sole Species contains as much of *Christ* as both together, viz. all *Christ* entirely. Neither is a greater Measure of Grace conferred by the Sacrament, precisely when it is taken in both Kinds, than when it is only taken in one; For as St. Paul says, an *Israelite* that gathered much Manna, had nothing over, than he who gathered less: So a Christian who receives the Sacrament under both Kinds, has nothing more of *Christ*, or of Sacramental Grace, than he who receives it under one Kind only, [if there be a Parity as to the Disposition of the Receivers.] And as the Church heretofore commanded the Laity to receive in both Kinds, so to exclude the *Manicheans* [who held the Cup to be unlawful, and not the Blood of *Christ*, but the Gall of the Devil] from the Communion of the Faithful; so now she commands them to receive under the Form of Bread only, to exclude and detect such Hereticks, as hold that *Christ* is not wholly contained under either Species alone.

There are other Reasons why all should not be bound to receive under both Kinds; as first, considering how soon Wine decays, the Sacrament could

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not well be kept, which would be necessary for the Sick, if all were bound to receive under both Species.

*Secondly*, it would endanger many Irreverences of spilling the Chalice, if all, both Old and Young, Sick and Lame, were bound to receive it.

*Thirdly*, Because some Constitutions can neither endure the Taste nor smell of Wine.

*Lastly*, Because in some Countries true Wine is very hard to be met with. For these and the like Reasons *Christ* would not bind all to receive under both Kinds, but would leave the Manner of receiving to the Determination of the Church.

We read in the Writings of the Holy Fathers, that in the primitive Church, the holy Sacrament was received by the People sometimes under one Kind only, and sometimes under both.

In the second Age, St. *Dionysius* asserts (L. de Eccles. Hierach. C. ult. & 4.) the Communion of Infants under one Kind.

In the third Age, *Tertullian* tells us, (L. ad Uxorem.) it was then a Custom to carry the Eucharist Home to their Houses, for private Communion; which could not be done but under one Kind: Because, as St. *Athanasius* affirms, (Apol. 2. cont. Arianos.) that Chalices were not permitted to be in Lay-mens Houses.

In the same Age, St. *Cyprian* affirms, (Serm. de lapsis Nom. 10.) that it was given to Infants, and to the Sick, in one Kind only.

In the fourth Age, St. *Ambrose* asserts, (Orat. de obitu Satyri.) they kept the Eucharist after Consecration; and that his Brother *Satyrus* in a Shipwreck was miraculously delivered from the Waters, by having the Eucharist tied about his Neck.

In the same Age *Eusebius* testifies (L. vi. C. 36.) they were used to send the Sacrament by Sea into far Countries; which could not be done but under one Kind.

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In the fifth Age, St. *Augustin* teaches (L. advers. Julian. Prelag. C. iv. & Tom. ii. & in Epist. 106.) the Practice of Communion under one Kind for Infants.

And the Council of *Constance*, in the Year of our Lord 1415, has decreed against all such as rashly presume to say, (Sess. 13, 14.) *That Christian People ought to receive the Sacrament under both Kinds, &c. That as the Custom of the Laity receiving under the Form of Bread only, had been lawfully brought into the Church for avoiding some Dangers and Scandals, and very long observed, &c. so it ought to be held for a Law, which is not lawful to reject without the Church's Authority.*

Let us now see what are the chief Effects or Benefits of the holy Eucharist.

The first Effect is, that it is the Food and Nourishment of our Souls, and the Support of our spiritual Life: Hence our Saviour said (John vi.) *My Flesh is truly Meat, and my Blood is truly Drink.* Wherefore, says St. *Cyprian*, he left us his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink, in order to nourish our Souls.

The second is, to preserve and produce an Increase of Grace in the Soul of the worthy Receiver: as also an Increase of Christian Virtues, as Faith, Hope, and Charity. This Effect, however it be common to all the Sacraments, yet it is more peculiar to this, as being more particularly instituted for the Nourishment of the Soul, and to make it increase in a spiritual Life. For as *Christ* himself says, (John vi. 58.) *He that eateth me shall also live by me.*

The third is, That by Virtue thereof we may be united to *Christ*, and made, as it were, one with him: Wherefore our Saviour says, (John vi. 57.) *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him.* By which Words he testifies the great Love he has for us, in leaving us his  
Body

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Body and Blood, to feed and nourish our Souls, and in order that he might unite himself more closely to us. But let us see, how by receiving the holy Sacrament, we are united to *Christ*, and how we can be made one with him. You must not, dear Christians, imagine that the Eucharist uniteth us with *Christ*, so as to make one Person, nor is the Body of *Christ* changed into our Bodies when we receive it; we are made indeed like unto him by Grace, but we cannot convert or change him into ourselves, as we do our corporal Meat; but by the Communion of his Body and Blood, he is in us, and we in him.

The *fourth* is, That it remitteth venial Sin, and preserves us against mortal. Wherefore St. *Ambrose* says, that the Eucharist is often received for a Remedy against our daily Infirmities, and that it makes us beware of mortal Sin. Hence the Council of *Trent* affirmed, (Sess. 13. C. 2.) that this Sacrament is a Preservative against mortal Sin, and a Remedy against venial Sin. It not only strengthens against Sin, but also against the Temptations which inclines to it.

The *fifth* Effect is, That it heals the Distempers of the Soul; that is, the Passions and disorderly Affections thereof. It weakens Concupiscence, or gives new Strength to overcome it. It diminishes Choler, Envy, Pride and other Vices, as St. *Bernard* excellently well observes, (Serm. de Cœna Dom.) ‘If any one, says he, does not find so frequent or so violent Motions of Anger, Envy, Impurity, or of other like Passions, let him give Thanks to the Body and Blood of our Lord; for ’tis the Virtue of this Sacrament which produces in him these Effects: and let him rejoice that the worst of Ulcers begin to heal.’

Lastly, The holy Eucharist gives a Right to eternal Life; wherefore *Christ* said (John vi.) *If any one shall eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.* It also gives Perseverance in the Grace of God and in the Way of Salvation, in the midst of the various and imminent

imminent Dangers which we encounter in this Life, and particularly when we draw near Death; whence the Church always takes Care to communicate the Sick when they are in Danger of Death, that so they may be strengthened in that dangerous Passage, and happily arrive at the Haven of Salvation by Means of this divine Nourishment, which is then called the *Viaticum*, that is to say, All Things necessary for a Journey.

These, dear Christians, are some of the chief Benefits and admirable Effects of this divine Sacrament, and ought effectually to excite and move you frequently to approach to it, and not to neglect so many and so signal Favours as God there presents unto you. But you must take notice, that it does not produce these Effects, unless you are rightly disposed to receive it as it deserves. These Dispositions I will explain to you in the next Discourse, and so conclude with this Admonition, as being the Duty of the Ministers of the Church, to invite and exhort all the Faithful to frequent Communion.

There is nothing more edifying than to see the Faithful flock to the Foot of the Altar, upon this Occasion. But then let me tell you, 'tis a terrible Reflection to consider how little Preparation is made for that divine Work, how few there are that amend their Lives by having Recourse to it. Follow therefore the Advice of *St. Paul*, be sincere in proving yourselves and disclosing the secrets of your Consciences: Let your Hearts be bruised by a true Contrition for your Sins; be steddy in your good Purposes; be careful in avoiding the Occasions of Sin; be just to your Neighbour in restoring his Goods and Reputation; approach the holy Table with a clear Conscience, both in Regard of God and Man, that nothing may deprive you of those Blessings that are promised to those who worthily partake of those divine Mysteries. Let not therefore either Sloth, or any



any Excuse, put you off from communicating at least once a Month; since upon a frequent and right Use of this Sacrament, depends your Happiness here, and your eternal Welfare hereafter.

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DISC. IV.

*On the SACRAMENT of the holy EUCHARIST.*

*Let a Man prove himself; and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of the Chalice. 1 Cor. xi. 28.*

FROM these Words of St. Paul, you see, dear Christians, that it is necessary for all Persons, as often as they approach to the holy Communion, to examine themselves, and see whether or no their Consciences accuse them of any mortal or grievous Sin, and so to approach with the Dispositions that are necessary for the worthy receiving this Sacrament. For as holy David said, (1 Chron. xxix 1.) when he was about to build a Temple for the Worship of God; 'Tis a great Work, says he, since 'tis not to prepare an Abode for Man, but for God. So in like manner, all those who design to prepare themselves for a worthy Communion, have far greater Reason to say, 'Tis a great Work I am going about, since I am to prepare an Abode, not for Man, but for God. O! how great is this Action? It far surpasses what David was about; 'tis not to build a material Temple of Brick and Stone, for the Worship of the Deity; but it is to prepare our Hearts, that they may become fit Temples for the Son of God to dwell therein. 'Ts so to purify our Souls, that there be nothing left there that may offend his Eye. 'Tis so to adorn our Souls, that all there may be agreeable to that divine Purity which does us the Honour to come to us. No doubt, dear Christians, this is a great Work; but let me tell you, 'tis more than this; for

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it is so to purify yourselves, that *Christ* may be united to you, that he may be changed into you, and you into him, according to what he himself says, (St. John vi.) *He that eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, dwells in me and I in him.*

When you intend then to receive, you ought seriously to consider, 'tis a great Work you have upon your Hands; you are to prepare in your Hearts an Habitation fit for God; so adorned, and so perfect, that he may be united to you, and you to him.

Consider then with yourselves, do you think the God of all Purity can be united to a Soul whose Affections are impure, or that's given to filthy Discourse or filthy Actions? Can *Christ*, who is the Pattern of Humility and Meekness, be united to a Soul that's proud or passionate? Can he, who was obedient even unto Death, be united to a disobedient, wilful, or stubborn Heart? Can he, who bore all the Scorn and Contempt of the World, all the Injuries and Abuses of malicious Men, and all the Persecutions and Torments his Enemies heaped upon him, with an untired Patience, be united to a Soul that will bear nothing, that flies into Cursing and Swearing upon every Provocation? Can the Fountain of all Justice be united to one that is unjust in his Dealings, takes or detains what is not his own? Can the God of all Sanctity be united to a Heart, where Uncharitableness, or any unmortified Passion rules? What Communions must such Persons make? How hateful to their Lord and God? Can there be any Union, think you, betwixt Sanctity and *Belial*? These, instead of receiving that divine Life, which *Christ* would communicate to their Souls, were they but duly prepared for it, they receive their Death, they receive their Judgment, and their own Damnation; according to that of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xi. 29.) *He that eats or drinks unworthily, eats and drinks Damnation unto himself,*

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What then are Dispositions and Preparations in order for a worthy Communion? These, dear Christians, are what I shall lay before you in this Discourse.

The *first*, and necessary Disposition, is to purge and purify your Souls from all mortal Sin, by a hearty Sorrow, and a sincere and true Confession, so as to be in the State of Grace. For the Eucharist is of the Number of those Sacraments, which are instituted, not to confer the first Grace (which only belongs to Baptism and Penance) but to encrease Grace already conferred. And the Reason of this is, because to be in the State of Grace, is to be in Charity with God and our Neighbour, which is a Thing absolutely necessary for Communion.

The *second* Disposition is, not only to be free from the Guilt of all mortal Sin, but you must also be free from the Affections or Inclination to all venial Sins. What I mean by Affection to venial Sins, is, such an Adhesion to, or Love of them, as to make a Person not only commit them often, but also not to endeavour to avoid them; being so insensible of their Malice, as to make little or no Account of them. And altho' these Defects do not render you absolutely unworthy, or the Communion sacrilegious, yet they cause very ill Effects, and considerably diminish the Fruits, which otherwise it would produce in your Souls.

The *third* Disposition is, to approach the holy Communion with a right Intention. For it is certain, that an Action, how good soever in itself, may lose its Value for want of a good Intention; and may even become evil and vicious, if the Intention be such. This being true in all good Actions whatsoever, it is still more in this of Communion; since it is a Contempt of the Greatness and Sanctity of God, to approach unto him upon any other Motive or Intention, than that of honouring and pleasing him, and meriting his Grace and Favour.



As often then as you approach to the holy Communion, let it be with an Intention wholly pure; that is, your Motive for so doing must be directed to the Honour and Glory of God, and your own Salvation. *1st*, To serve and please God the more, and thereby to unite yourselves more strictly to him, that he may remain in you, and you in him. *2dly*, To promote your own Salvation, by obtaining, through the Means of a holy Communion, all those Graces you stand in need of; as to the Amendment of your Faults, to resist Temptations, and to strengthen you in the Practice of Virtue. It is also good to add to this general Intention some particular End, according to your present Necessities: As for Example, To obtain such and such particular Graces you stand in need of, in order to correct in yourselves such and such Faults, and to advance in some particular Virtue. You must not therefore approach out of any human Motive, that is, by proposing to yourselves an evil Thing, as the Motive or Reason of your Communion. As for Example, out of *Hypocrisy*, in order to dissemble and conceal some Fault, with an Appearance of Piety; nor out of *Vanity*, to be esteemed virtuous; nor out of human Respect, lest you should displease any one, or because it may be expected of you; neither must you approach purely out of Custom, as being the usual Time of your going to communicate. But alas! it is to be feared these Motives are but too common amongst those who are not sufficiently instructed concerning the Intention they ought to have in communicating. The two first are the greatest Faults, and, commonly speaking, renders the Communion sacrilegious; the others deprive one of the best Part of the Fruit it otherwise would produce.

Now, in order to prepare yourselves for Communion, the first thing you are to do after you have been at Confession, is to return Almighty God your hearty Thanks for the Pardon of your Sins; for certainly it argues



argues a great Insensibility or Ingratitude, to make no Return to him that has granted you so great a Favour. Then turn your Mind, and apply your whole Thoughts to the great Action you are about to perform, to make a worthy Communion. And to do this, you are to endeavour to raise in yourselves actual Devotion, and the most perfect you can; because in this Sacrament, you receive more or less Grace, in Proportion to the greater or less Devotion wherewith you receive it.

But perhaps you will ask me, What you must do to raise this Devotion in your Hearts?

I'll tell you, dear Christians: You must endeavour to cause it by raising in your Minds Acts of Faith, Acts of Hope, Acts of Charity, Acts of Humility, joined with a pious Confidence in your God.

First consider with yourselves, *who* and *what* it is you are to receive. 'Tis no less than the King of Heaven and Earth, the infinite Majesty of God himself, veil'd under the Appearance of Bread and Wine. Think on this, and then call to Mind all the Mercies of your dear Redeemer, as he himself ordered you so to do, when he instituted this adorable Mystery, the last great Memorial of his Love; *As often as you do this*, says he, *do it in Remembrance of me*: In Remembrance of what he did and suffered for you. Call to Mind the Years, the Days, and Hours he lived, and all for your sake, wherein not a Day or Hour ever passed, but he often remembered you: Call to mind the Pains he suffered, and suffered them all for you: Call to mind the last Scene of his Life, wherein he suffered a cruel Death for you; and at the same Time, by the Invention of his Kindness, as the Prophet calls it, lest you in this Sacrament his own Body and Blood, for a Remembrance of him, the dearest Legacy, and the kindest Pledge of his Love. When you have considered this well over, it will, sure, raise some Devotion in your Hearts, and an ardent Desire of this great Sacrament. But you

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must remember that *Christ* increases his Grace and Blessing, in Proportion to the ardent Desires of the Communicant, and always fills the Heart that is open to him. The Reason then, why some find not these interior Comforts, and Sweetness in their Souls, at and after Communion, is, because they are not thoroughly recollected, or are negligent in preparing their Hearts for them. *Christ* is never wanting to us: He comes to us as we come to him, and leaves his Blessings there, where they are heartily desired.

Thus, you see, this Sacrament is a continual Monitor to you, to put you in mind of his Love, of what he has done, and what he has suffered for you. And on the one side, as it is a great Argument of his kind Concern for you, so on the other, it is no small Proof of your Backwardness and Insensibility, to stand in need to be thus put in mind of his Favours and Blessings.

Think then, Christian Soul, if Obligations can move thy Gratitude, Who has obliged thee like thy God? If Advantages can win thy Heart, What greater canst thou enjoy, than thou enjoyest in him? Or if Love can engage thy Love, Who loves thee like him? Who has, or will do, what he has, and will do for thee?

However, this great Condescension and Love of your Redeemer, ought not to make you forget yourselves; because he is good, you ought not to be presumptuous: You ought to consider who You are, as well as who He is. But now, that you may approach with that Care and Respect, as becomes the Greatness of the Giver and the Gift, you ought attentively to consider the Unworthiness, as well as the Meanness of the Receiver: Mean indeed, no better than Dust and Ashes, form'd from the Earth we tread on; and must one Day return again into the same Mould. What profound Respect is due from us! Nay, was this our only Hindrance, were not we worse than God has made us, we might have more Confidence,

dence. But, alas! our Ingratitude to all this Goodness, the many Sins we have committed, our present and daily Imperfections, are a Weight sufficient to bear us down, and humble us indeed in the Presence of our God, and with just Reason to cry out, How comes it to pass the Son of God comes to me, not in a ceremonious Visit, but to live and dwell, and to be united to me! If the Heavens of Heavens cannot contain thee how much less the little Room, the poor Habitation, I have made for thee in my Heart! Consider this seriously and you will not dare to approach this Table without great Purity of Soul, and without employing what Time you can in preparing your Hearts, by raising in them Acts of Virtue; that you may come with an interior, as well as an exterior, Decency to receive your Lord.

In some such manner as this you are to prepare yourselves, before you come to the Altar to receive the Bread of Life; you are to entertain yourselves, sometimes with an awful Fear, and Apprehension of the Sanctity of his Person, and Greatness of his Majesty; sometimes with Hope and a pious Confidence in his Goodness; sometimes Respect, and sometimes Love; sometimes a Desire of the great Blessing, and sometimes an humble Acknowledgment of your great Unworthiness, and the like. That the Excess of Fear make you not too apprehensive, or a too forward Confidence cause you to become negligent.

When the Time of your receiving draws near, endeavour, in great Peace and Calmness of Mind, to increase the Devotion of your Hearts; and when the Priest turns about to give you the general Absolution, receive it with all the Contrition of your Soul, that you may communicate with greater Purity. When he turns about again, holding the Blessed Sacrament in his Hand, and says, *Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the Sins of the World*; and repeats thrice, *Lord I am not worthy thou shouldst enter under my Roof, but say only the Word, and my Soul*



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*shall be healed:* Join in Spirit with him, and repeat the same in your Hearts, and endeavour to mix a profound Humility, grounded on your Unworthiness, with a pious Confidence, built upon the Power and Goodness of your God, who can make you worthy.

Having thus prepared yourselves, and having received the greatest Blessing Earth or Heaven can bestow upon you; what are you then to do, or how are you to behave yourselves, after your Communion? I'll tell you, dear Christians:

After you have received the Blessed Sacrament, your Lord and Saviour, you must know he remains in Person in you, as long as the Species of Bread remain entire in your Breast, which it may be about Half, or a Quarter of an Hour; after which Time he ceases to be there in Person, tho' he still continues by his Grace, as long as you preserve yourselves from any Consent to what is mortal Sin. This Sacrament is different from all the other Six; the Nature, or Action of them passes in a Moment; but this is a standing Sacrament, and consists in a continued Action, and gives Grace, as long as it continues: So as long as *Christ* remains in Person within you, so long he is ready to give you his Grace, and still to encrease it, as long as you behave yourselves devoutly, and ask it as you ought. Therefore suffer not yourselves as the Wise-man says (Eccles. xiv. 14.) to lose so good a Day as this, and let not the least Part of so precious a Gift be lost. This you ought particularly to take notice of, and remember; for 'tis the Ground of all your Devotion after Communion.

The first Thing then you are to do, after you have return'd to your Place, is, to give Thanks to Almighty God for all the Benefits he has bestowed upon you; as your Creation, Conservation, Redemption; your Call to the Catholick Faith, and particularly for this his great Favour, in coming himself to you in this wonderful and condescending manner, which is to put you in mind of all the rest, what he has done and suffered



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suffered for you; as he himself has told you, *As often as you do this, do it in Remembrance of me.*

After this, you may endeavour to entertain yourself with your Saviour, and to raise in your Mind Affections of Respect, Gratitude, and Love; by considering the Honour done you this Day, and the Treasure you have lodged in your Breast. This part of your Devotion being over, you may make your Prayer to your Saviour now within you, and ask of him (for no Time can be more favourable) what you want most; to be freed from this or that Temptation, this Trouble or that Affliction: Ask of him the Virtue you stand in need of; Patience, Resignation, Courage or Resolution, Purity of Heart, Prayer, Grace to comply with the Duties of your State, and so much Strength as never to be overcome by Compliance with Company, or human Respects, and the like. Lose not these precious Moments, for none can be more favourable to you than whilst your Lord remains within you, to hear your Petitions and to grant your Request; and be sure what you do ask, to ask from your Hearts, for he sees into them, so that you cannot deceive him.

With these Thoughts and Resolutions, you depart out of the Church or Chapel, and think on them all the Way you go home; and be sure to spend that Day well, in Reading and Praying, and in some sober and pious Conversation; lose no Part of that happy Day.

This, dear Christians, is the Practice of Communion, what you are to do before and what after: What you are to do to prepare your Hearts to receive your Lord God, and how you are to entertain him after you have received him. Those who go to Confession over Night, or early in the Morning, have greater Conveniency to make this Preparation, and it will certainly be rewarded by the Sweetness and Comfort *Christ* will give them in Return; for he always comes to us as we come to him. Those who stay some Time after, to entertain their Saviour, he will

doubtless requite them, he will give them Grace in Proportion to their Gratitude; he will grant them the Favour they ask of him: For what can he refuse us, when he gives us himself? But such careless Christians, as take little Time, either to prepare themselves, or to entertain their Lord after, lose very great Advantages which they might reap from a better Preparation; and as they thus neglect God, 'tis to be feared he will neglect them, and withdraw the Grace they carelessly abuse.

Be careful then in your Preparation to this great Sacrament: And be sure not to be wanting in your Recollection, after you have received so great a Blessing; every Moment of that Time well employed will deserve an Addition of Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

### DISC. V.

*On the SACRAMENT of the holy EUCHARIST.*

*Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, but only speak the Word, and my Servant will be healed. Matt. xiii. 8.*

**T**HE humble Centurion, coming to our Saviour Christ, exposed to him the weak and sickly Condition of his Servant, in these Words; *Lord, my Servant lies sick at Home, and sore troubled with the Palsy.* He did not presume to beg the Favour of our Saviour, that he would come to his House, nor even entreated him to cure his Servant; he remitted both to our Saviour's Will and Pleasure. He knew he could heal him if he pleased, and would heal him, if it was best; and therefore with an humble Submission, and yet with a lively Faith, he barely laid open the Infirmary of his Servant. Our Saviour admired his Faith, and told him, he would go with him, and  
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cure his Servant. *I will come and cure him; but the Centurion reply'd, Lord, I am not worthy of so great a Favour as, that you should come to my House; say but the Word, and I know my Servant will be cured.*

Such were the pious Dispositions that appear in the Words of the Centurion; his Faith so lively, his Humility so singular, his Confidence in our Saviour *Christ* so rare, the Sense of his own unworthiness so wonderful, that the Church has judged his Words, of all others, the most proper to express the Devotion and Sentiments we ought to have, when our Saviour is pleased to come unto us, in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. His Words for many Ages, have been consecrated in such a manner, as to have been thrice repeated by the Priest, to every one who has received our Saviour *Christ*, in the holy Communion. No one, either Priest or Laity, receives without first making use of the same Words, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, that thou shouldst come unto my Soul; only say the word and my Soul shall be cured*, shall be filled with heavenly Benedictions.

We have all the Reasons imaginable, to acknowledge with a most profound Humility, that none of us, how virtuous soever, is worthy of so great a Favour, that our Saviour and God should come to us, in this adorable Sacrament. We have certainly just Reason to imitate the Dispositions of the Centurion; to approach, not only with a great Sense of our own Unworthiness, but with a lively Faith, with a firm Confidence, with a grateful Mind, and a sincere Return of Love to Gbd, for so inestimable a Benefit.

In order therefore to increase your Devotion towards this Sacrament, I will endeavour, *first*, to lay before you the wonderful Goodness and Liberality of Almighty God, in leaving to his Church this holy Sacrament; and secondly, In a general manner, the Happiness and Advantages offered to us in this Sacrament,



ment, and which we are deprived of by seldom receiving, or approaching to it.

Many and great are the Benefits which Almighty God has been pleased to confer upon Man; and yet the Distance between our infinite God and our mean Condition is so great, that we cannot return him any suitable Requital for the least of his Favours; hence we remain eternally indebted to him upon a thousand Accounts, upon a thousand Titles. He created Man out of Nothing to his own Image and Likeness; he preserves him every Moment from falling into his original Nothing; he has commanded the Sun, Moon, and Stars to wait upon him; he has ordered the Elements to be subservient to his Convenience; he has given his Command to the different Seasons of the Year; to furnish him with all desirable Varieties; all living Creatures he has made subject to him. For this, Man shall remain ever in his Debt. Yes, dear Christians, this is but the least Part of his Favours. He redeemed Man when he had lost himself by Sin; he has conferred upon him supernatural Gifts, blessed him with spiritual Favours, he offers him his sanctifying Grace, a Participation of his divine Nature, and with it all the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. All these infinitely increase Man's Debt, and are an additional Overplus of the overflowing Bounty of the Almighty towards undeserving Man.

But if we take a thorough Survey of the immense Benefits he has liberally bestowed on us, in leaving us this holy Sacrament, we shall find, that 'tis here his Goodness seems to have outdone itself; 'tis here, that he transfers the whole Treasure of Heaven unto our Souls. For to measure this Benefit by the infinite Dignity of the Giver, and the mean Condition of the Receiver, 'tis here that the Gift and the Giver are both infinite, both the same, both God himself: So that in this Sacrament we meet with a Paradise upon Earth; we meet with a Heaven in every Catholick Church, in every Tabernacle, in every devout Communion.



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municant. 'Tis in this Miracle of Love, this Excess of Bounty, this Memorial of himself, I would say, 'tis in this leaving of himself, that he has concentrated or gathered together all that is good; that he pours out an Ocean of Bliss into our Souls, and fills them full with heavenly Benedictions. So wonderful has been his Goodness towards Man, notwithstanding his Ingratitude; tho' he commonly receives Provocations, Injuries and Contempt, yet his infinite Majesty stoops so low, as to make Man his Darling; for he declares *his Delight is to be with Men* (Prov. viii. 31.) But what Love, what Bounty, can we ever discover comparable to this? He elected the *Israelites* to be his chosen, his dearly-beloved People; but what Benefit did he ever confer upon them equal to this?

In the Holy of Holies, which was a more religious Part of the Tabernacle, and afterwards of the Temple, he commanded them to place the Ark of the Covenant, the Seat of Mercy and Atonement, and there he was particularly present to hear their Prayers and Petitions. Doubtless, dear Christians, this was a singular Favour, and such as never had been granted to any Nation under the Cope of Heaven. But what is this to the Benefit left us in the blessed Eucharist? The Ark was but a Representation of the Presence of the Divinity: In the Eucharist, *Christ God and Man* is personally and really present: In the Ark was the Manna, a Type, a bare Resemblance of this Sacrament in which is contained the Truth itself. Thus, you see the Benefits we enjoy in our Tabernacle infinitely surpass theirs.

Yet if you reflect, how different a Respect he exacted they should pay to the Holy of Holies, what a Subject of Fear and Confusion to yourselves? What an Argument of Love and Thanksgiving to God will you discover? None but the High Priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies, and he but once a Year, after he had sanctified himself, in his R pontificals; and yet to this true Holy of Holies, all  
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Persons, at all Times, have free Access. Into our Catholick Churches every one, good or bad, have free Liberty to come, and offer their Petitions, in that Place where God himself is personally present; a singular Favour indeed, which you ought always to be sensible of; a Benefit granted to each particular Person, far above the Privilege reserved to the High Priest. The High Priest was but suffer'd to enter in, to contemplate, to be a Spectator of the Ark, *the Footstool of God*, as the *Psalmist* calls it (*Psal. xcviij.*) The rest of the *Jews*, both Priest and People, were excluded from the Sight of it, it was Death for them to enter into the same Apartment: But now every one of you are permitted not only to approach to the Tabernacle where the true God is really present, but have free Liberty to receive your God into your Breasts, to be in a manner incorporated with your Saviour: Every Man, rich or poor, nay, what is more, every sinful Man, if become penitent, is permitted, invited in his nuptial Garment, to receive the true God, infinite, immense, eternal, under the Appearance of Bread, for his spiritual Nourishment. O unheard-of Familiarity of God with Man! The Almighty by a Miracle of Love is become the Nourishment of his Servants, his Slaves! O Transport of divine Charity! O Invention of infinite Love towards ungrateful Man! Let all Men acknowledge, all Mankind testify, their Gratitude for such infinite Love.

But, O Blindness of Man's Heart! by daily Use, to fall into Inadvertency of these Truths; 'tis a Reflection I must insist upon. Had our Saviour left a Power in his Church to one Priest, to consecrate once, in one Place only, and that by this Means he had vouchsafed to have been present, how unspeakable a Benefit had it been? How far above our Merits, how infinitely would the World have been obliged to him for it? But let us suppose yet more, that he had pleased to grant this Power to some particular Priests, of a consummate Sanctity; if he had pleased to remain in some particular City of the World; to leave such  
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a heaven'y Banquet in some one Church, whither the Faithful, from all Parts of the Universe, might have Recourse to pay due Homage and Worship to the Divinity, there really present, and, if you please, there to receive their God in this holy Sacrament: What a Pilgrimage of Devotion, and with good Reason, would that have been, what Crouds, what Concourse? How happy would you think yourselves to partake of this Banquet? How sensible would you have been of so inestimable a Favour? How would the Consideration of the real Presence of God, have recollected your Thoughts in that Church? Would the most licentious Libertine have dared to commit an Irreverence in that sacred Place? How then would the Thoughts of really receiving God into your Breasts have inflamed your Devotion, and set every Communicant on Fire? With what Affections, with what Aspirations, with what Reverence, with what Love, with what heavenly Thanksgiving, would you have entertained your Saviour? Would you not then have thought yourselves more happy the oftner you received? Would you then have judged a little Part of a Morning too long to prepare yourselves to receive your God? And now, since the Bounty of God has been more liberal, what shame for you to be less grateful? You have now the Presence of the same God; he has graciously left you this infinite immense Treasure, not in a Corner of the World, but in every Catholick Church, upon every Altar, he has given Power to every Priest to consecrate his precious Body and Blood; he offers himself to be received by every Christian; he invites all to be Partakers of this Table, this Feast of Angels. Nor has he limited this Benefit to a Time, but granted this infinite Treasure to the End of the World. What Blindness then to have less Esteem, because the Benefit is greater? What Ingratitude, to be less thankful, because his Bounty has been more liberal; to be less reverent, because your God is present in every  
Tabernacle



Tabernacle, not in one only? Not to long to receive him so often, because you have the greater Convenience? With good Reason then may I cry out, with the devout Author of the *Imitation of Christ*, O deplorable Weakness of Man, to have less Regard, less Esteem, because the Benefit is more common and greater!

Let me exhort you, dear Christians, to correct this Error, by reflecting on the Truths, which by Faith you are certain of. When you prepare yourselves for Communion, you make ready an Habitation in your Souls for God; when you go to the Altar, miserable sinful Dust as you are, you go, you kneel to receive Almighty God; there by the Hands of the Priest, Almighty God comes really into your Breasts; you return, but in a far different Manner, bearing your God in your Breasts. Can you reflect with yourselves on these Truths, and not be struck with a sacred Dread and Confusion; and not be forced into a sweet Love and ardent Affection? What strange Insensibility, not to be moved with such Mysteries? How frozen must your Hearts be, not to melt at such a Fire, such a Miracle of Love, such Excess of Goodness, so endearing Affection, from the infinite Person of God towards Man? Does it not challenge Love for Love? His divine Majesty yields to Love, he lays aside all Marks of Power and Greatness to meet with Man; he puts himself under the Appearance of Bread and Wine, that by this Means he may unite himself to you, or rather that you may become one with him. Thus sanctifying Man by such a Union to the Divinity; and you think Part of a Morning too tedious to entertain him, and spend here in his Presence, and why? for should you consecrate your whole Lives, spend all your Thoughts in Acts of Love, Adoration, Thanksgiving, for so inestimable a Gift, what poor Exchange would it be? His Love to you in this adorable Sacrament, is infinite; all you can return is infinitely less, and of no



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Value: His Love towards you, is without any Merit on your Side; nay even when by your Demerits you have deserved Punishments, and not Rewards; but all you can repay to him is but a Return of his Gifts? And can you then think much to allot some Part every Day to his Service, to spend here in his Presence.

The Patriarchs and Prophets, with longing Sighs, and fervent Desires, supplicated for his coming, with Minds and Hearts raised up to Heaven; they begged, that the long-expected Saviour of the World would at last descend from Heaven; and now the the same Saviour of Mankind remains with you, and yet you are unwilling to be with him; you think you do much if you prepare yourselves a little Part of a Morning, to entertain the same Redeemer, for whose coming the World some Thousands of Years sigh'd, and begg'd that he would vouchsafe to descend and come unto them. But now, alas! the same Saviour of the World descends, and is forced to beg of Men that they would receive him, and they will not often come unto him. O most divine *Jesus*! how low has thy Love to every one of us made thee descend? Here Love is carried to its greatest Perfection, God himself courts Man's Love; notwithstanding he is so often basely treated, and betrayed by many a *Judas*, with a false Kiss, in unworthy Communion; yet he has abandoned himself to all Manner of Injuries and Affronts for Man's Sake; he is always ready in the Tabernacle to be received by him; in fine, he waits on Man, and when he is sick he comes and visits him in his Bed, to be his Protector in that dangerous Hour, and to replenish his Soul with heavenly Benedictions. Come all and see, and partake of this Prodigy of Love; thank, praise, and bless him for ever, for such a Benefit; treat him as he deserves; that is, frequently partake of this Feast of Angels, to which he invites you all. Happy Souls, who frequently and devoutly receive this Sacrament.

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Let us now take a short View of the Happiness of a devout Communicant. Here you may rejoice, because in this Sacrament you receive your God. This is in three Words, the Happiness I would speak of; thrice happy, because you receive your God; I will not, I cannot add any more; a bare Consideration of this Truth shall be all I will advance.

By receiving your God, you are united to the Cause and Author of all Happiness. In other Sacraments, you receive some Gift of his, some Testimony of his divine Goodness; but in the blessed Eucharist, you receive the Origin of all Goodness itself: In other Sacraments, some Stream of divine Grace, in this you approach to the Source and Fountain from whence issues all Grace. In others you receive some Help to Salvation; in this, a Saviour. In others, you partake of some heavenly Benediction; in this, you have him really present within you, whose Presence makes Heaven really what it is.

If holy *Simeon* thought his Happiness so singular, because he had at last seen his Redeemer, and once had him in his Arms, that he could wish for no more, but weary as it were of the World, and desired to live no longer; how far does the Happiness of every Christian surpass his, who hath the Convenience, not once only, but as often as he pleases, to receive the same Saviour, not into his Arms, but into his Breast! If the whole Church pronounces the Evangelist *St. John* happy, because he once leaned his Head upon his Saviour's Breast; how much happier are you, dear Christians, into whose Breasts the same Saviour, as often as you will, enters! In fine, we look upon the great *St. Joseph* singularly happy, as with good Reason we may, because he brought up and nourished our Saviour *Christ*; how much greater is your Happiness, who are fed and nourished by the Body and Blood of the same *Christ*! Rejoice, Christians, I say rejoice, for your great transcending Happiness.

As often as you communicate, you receive him whom the Angels adore; you are really united to Him, whose Sight makes the Angels happy. By receiving this Holy Sacrament, you have him really present within you, whose Majesty the Powers and Thrones with Astonishment adore; at whose Presence the Cherubims and Seraphims, the whole Celestial Hierarchy, and the Pillars of Heaven tremble. But at the same Time you receive likewise a most loving Saviour, a meek, liberal, and gracious Redeemer, and Almighty Protector in your Temptations, a Sanctuary in all your Dangers. Here the Distressed find a Comforter, the Blind an infallible Guide, the Infirm an omnipotent Physician, the penitent Sinner his Sanctuary: In fine, by receiving this holy Sacrament, you receive *Christ*, God and Man; and what will he not grant you, who has given you himself? He comes not without his Attendance; that is, Plenty of Graces and heavenly Benedictions.

If the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, sprinkled on the Doors of the *Israelites*, secured them against Death and Destruction, will not the Blood of the immaculate Lamb of God, secure you against all the Attacks of your Enemies? He entered into the House of *Zaccheus* the Publican, and he and his whole Family were bless'd thereby; and will he receive less, into whose Breast the same Saviour enters by Communion? And as many as had the Happiness to touch the Hem of his Garment, were cured of all their Diseases out of hand; What Infirmary then shall not be expell'd from that Habitation, that Soul, who receives the Saviour, God and Man, Body, Soul, and Divinity, really, personally, and substantially, into his Breast? Come, dear Christians, come to this heavenly Banquet, and you shall be sanctified; by your devout and frequent Communions, you shall lose your Infirmities, your inveterate Habits, by this Union to the Deity; you shall be

no more the same, no more Slaves to Sin and your Passions; but *Christ* shall transform you into himself. 'Tis true, you shall remain still attack'd by Temptations, assaulted by your Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; yet against all these you shall come off victorious.

Would you but reflect seriously on these Truths, you would not be so backward in approaching to your God in this Sacrament, so unthinking of your own Happiness, and so ungrateful to your bountiful Redeemer. The only Reason I can find, is, because you know not who it is, that is present in the midst of you, 'tis true, you are undoubtedly certain of it by Faith, yet you know it not; that is, you are as if you knew it not, you consider it not.

But oh! dear Christians, did you but know the Favour granted you, to appear in his Presence; did you but consider the Happiness you have here offered you; did you but reflect how nigh you are to your own Felicity; did you but seriously call to Mind, with what Facility you may partake of such heavenly Treasures; did you but weigh the Goodness of God that offers himself to you in this holy Sacrament, the Love, and longing Desire he has; you should frequent this holy Banquet; there would be no hindering you from your Happiness, you would answer his Desires with the like Affection; like as the wearied Hart pants after the Fountain to refresh his fainting Thirst. There would be no Need of the Church prescribing Times for your approaching to this Sacrament; as now she is forced to oblige (4 Con. Lateran. c. 25.) all the Faithful of both Sexes, who are come to the Years of Discretion, to receive the blessed Eucharist, at least once a Year, and that in the Time of *Easter*, under Pain of Excommunication, and being deprived of Christian Burial. Now there is scarce any Misery that can be inflicted upon a *Catholick* more dreadful, even to the Libertine, than



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the Thunder-Clap of an Excommunication ; and yet he who defers long his Communion, voluntarily in a Manner excommunicates himself, freely undergoing the greatest Penalty which the Censure of an Excommunication can inflict.

Some perhaps will say, they are not worthy to approach frequently. This commonly is the Plea of a false Reverence, and a Deceit of the Devil. You are not worthy, you say ; but why are you not worthy ? Or will you be more worthy by deferring it longer, by seldom communicating ? Oh no ! Experience makes it too evident to want a Proof ; he that does not communicate once a Month, or thereabouts, will be less worthy after a longer Delay. Let not those who approach frequently, but those who defer their Communions, who seldom have Access, dread to communicate unworthily. We see, when the primitive Christians communicated every Day, how Saint-like were their Lives, how fervent their Zeal, how active they were in their Christian Duties. The Council of *Trent* wishes the Faithful would now communicate as often ; but at least frequently. We are Passengers, Strangers, in this Vale of Misery, and therefore have continually Need of a Refreshment : The blessed Eucharist is our Sustenance, our *Viaticum*. Such is the Frailty of our infirm Nature, that whilst our Souls are imprisoned in this terrene Habitation of the Body, we are without Intermission depressed with a Proneness to Evil, and therefore stand always in Need of a Remedy, an Antitode ; the blessed Eucharist is this sovereign Antitode, as the Council of *Trent* calls it. We are at all Times assaulted by too potent Enemies for our weak Strength ; in the blessed Eucharist we meet with an omnipotent Protector.

But notwithstanding all this, the true Reason why a great many Christians neglect to make a frequent

quent Use of this Sacrament, is out of a slothful and careless Temper, as being not willing to take the Pains to prepare themselves. Others again excuse themselves, as being overwhelmed with Business, that, alas! they have not Time to pay their Attendance upon their blessed Redeemer. There are others who excuse themselves upon a Pretence yet worse than the former; those I mean who are strongly addicted to sensual Pleasures, and they know that to become Partakers of this holy Table, they must renounce their criminal Engagements; they must throw off their old Habits, and enter upon a new Course of Life; but finding their Hearts too strongly engaged to resolve upon a thorough Change, they refuse to approach.

Thus you see, how little the greater Part of Christians are disposed to comply with our Saviour's earnest Desire of communicating himself to them; He invites, and they refuse to come; he offers them his precious Body and Blood, and they prefer each petty Interest, or trifling Satisfaction before him.

Let me now beseech you to settle a right Esteem of the Benefit and Advantage you have, of making your Petitions here in his real Presence, of frequently receiving him; 'tis a Blessing and Convenience which perchance you may not always enjoy: For how many pious Catholicks are there in the World; who want and long for this Convenience? Nay, I know that there are many in this Nation who have not this Happiness of receiving the real Presence of their Saviour, above once or twice in the Year; would not they esteem the Convenience you have, more than you do, and make better Use of this Favour? It is well if they do not rise up in Judgment against you, as the City of Tyre and Sidon against Bethsaida and Corozain, for neglecting so singular a Favour, denied them, and granted to you.

But

But when you do approach, let it be with a right Intention, purely to serve and glorify God; not for some bye Motive; but above all with a good Will, and not by Constraint, because it may be expected of you, or out of Custom, or the like. I know not whether there is any Disposition more prejudicial to yourselves, or that looks more like Ingratitude to Almighty God: For is it not a singular Favour which he grants you, to permit you to pray in his Presence? And will you ungratefully doubt, whether the Favour be worth your Acceptance? No, dear Christians, far be this from you. Be sure then serve God with a willing Heart; for as the Scripture says, (Cor. ix. 7.) *God loves a cheerful Giver.* Be always grateful for the singular Favour he grants you, by permitting you to enter into the Holy of Holies, and here at all Times to pay your Devotions to him; to expose with Confidence your Necessities to him, to assist at the great and daily Sacrifice: Always remember and be grateful for the great Happiness that is here offered you, by having free Access to the holy Sacrament of the Altar; always be mindful of the inconceivable Love your blessed Saviour has shewed towards you, in leaving you the infinite Treasure of himself in this Banquet. Approach then to God, and he will come to you; that is, by receiving him in your Communion, you will then receive him whose Power is omnipotent; and what cannot he do for you? what will not he grant you? He will give you a Pledge of your future Glory in this Life, and eternal Happiness in the next; (St. John vi 59.) *for he that eats of this Bread shall live for ever.*

DISC. VI.

On the SACRAMENT of the holy EUCHARIST.

*He that eateth and drinketh unworthly, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself. 1 Cor. xi. 29.*

**T**HERE is nothing, dear Christians, so surprising, or more worthy of Astonishment, than to see that the most holy and adorable Sacrament of the Altar, the inexhaustible Source and Fountain of all Grace, and the most sovereign Remedy of all our Evils, should be received by Persons of all Sorts and Conditions, without producing in them that Change of Life which might be expected: And that our corporal Food should have a greater Effect in feeding our Bodies, than the Bread of Angels in nourishing our Souls. But if we look into the Cause of this, we shall find it is for Want of those Dispositions that are requisite, and the little Care the Generality of Christians take, in preparing themselves to receive this divine Food.

Amongst those who approach to the holy Communion, we may reckon three different Sorts. *First* there are some who approach with Coldness; *secondly*, others with Tepidity or Lukewarmness; and, *thirdly*, others with Fervour and Devotion, which becomes such as approach to this divine Table. But, that you may understand my Meaning the better, by such Persons who are *cold*, I understand those who approach to this holy Table in the State of Mortal Sin; by the *Lukewarm*, I mean such who have not laid aside their Affections to venial Sins; and by those who approach with *Fervour*, I mean those who go with Love, and the Dispositions suitable to the Holiness of this adorable Sacrament.

I have already laid before you the Advantages and great Happiness of a worthy Communion: What therefore



therefore I intend in this Discourse, is, *First* to shew you, that an unworthy Communion is the most heinous and detestable of all Crimes that can be committed; and, *secondly*, that there are many who are guilty of it.

The Greatness and Enormity of an unworthy Communion, is so much greater than that of any other Crime, in as much as by it you directly attack the sacred Person of *Jesus Christ*. Now, to understand this the better, only consider the Greatness of the Crime of that Subject, who should not only despise the Laws and Edicts of his Prince, but should even attempt the Life of his Sovereign; would not Justice seek out new Torments to punish such Treason? And is not his Crime, think you, infinitely greater, who endeavours to attack the Lord of Lords, and King of Glory? Such a Crime as this would certainly strike you with Horror; and let me tell you, dear Christians, that the unworthy Communicant is guilty of this; 'tis what St. Paul declares to us, (1 Cor. xii. 27.) *Whoever, says he, shall eat this Bread, or drink the Cup of our Lord unworthily is guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord.* This Sentence is a Thunder-bolt, which ought to terrify all those who are so miserably unfortunate as to communicate in mortal Sin; for he says, they are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Son of God: That is, they despise, and treat injuriously, this adorable Body and Blood, whilst they receive it into a profane Place, into the Temple of Satan, into a Soul defiled with mortal Sin. St. Chrysostom explaining these Words of St. Paul, *whoever shall eat the Bread, or drink the Cup of our Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord*, gives this Reason; 'Because,' says he, (Hom. 27.) whoever approaches to this divine Table unworthily, is like those who pierced the Body of our Lord, not to drink but to spill his Blood. That is to say, not to apply to them-

selves the spiritual Fruit and Benefit of it, but to profane it, and *trample it under Foot* (Heb. vi. 6.) according to St. *Paul's* Expression in another Place.

There is no Person, that has any Gratitude or Love for our Saviour, that can think upon his Death, Sufferings, and Torments, which he endured at that Time of his Passion, but would be struck with Horror and Indignation against those ungrateful and perfidious *Jews* who put him to Death. Nevertheless I must tell you, (since both Scriptures and Fathers declare it) though with Horror, that only the Crime the *Jews* committed, in crucifying our Saviour *Christ*, surpasses that which is now committed by every unworthy Communicant. What can you say to this, unhappy Souls, whoever you are, that have dared to commit such an heinous Crime? Have you ever seriously done Penance; or rather, ought not your whole Lives hereafter, to be a continual Series of Sighs and Lamentations for the enormous Crime you have committed? Because woe to them who have crucified our Saviour; and woe upon those likewise who receive him unworthily in the holy Sacrament. For let me tell you, that many amongst the *Jews* seem more excusable in crucifying their *Messiah*, than such wicked Christians who receive him in a Breast defiled with Sin; and though their Crime was enormous, it may be said they crucified him whom they knew not; and when they knew him, they returned confounded, knocking their Breasts, in Sorrow for what they had done, as St. *Luke* testifies (Luke xxiii.) But a Catholick Christian, as he cannot alledge not knowing his God, so he seems more inexcusable than such of the *Jews*, who, if they had known him, they would not have crucified him.

If the Apostle (Heb. vi.) St. *Paul* (speaking of those Persons who lose the Grace of God by mortal Sin) has declared, that they crucify again the Son of God,  
and

and expose him to Contempt, what shall I say of those, who commit the greatest of all Sacrileges, by an unworthy Communion? Unhappy Christians, who make their Bodies serve as another Cross, upon which they crucify their Saviour! and tho' he does not die, yet their Treachery is no less than that of the *Jews*, since they do what in them lies, to crucify him again.

‘ Consider, says St. *Chrysostom*, (Hom. 60), what just Indignation you conceive against him who betrayed *Jesus Christ*, and against those who crucified him, lest you also be equally guilty of the Body and Blood of the Son of God. It is true, they killed his sacred Body, but you, after so many, and so often repeated Benefits bestowed upon you, receive him into an unclean and polluted Soul.’

St. *Cyprian* says, (L. de Lapsis.) ‘ That unworthy Communicants offer Violence to the Body of *Jesus Christ*; and that this Sin is a more heinous Offence in the Sight of God, than it is for a Christian to abjure him before Infidels.’

No Christian can call to mind, without a certain Horror and Aversion, the treacherous Kiss of *Judas*; and can you be so insensible in your own Case, as not to detest the same Affront you offer *Jesus*, nay even worse, if possible, when you unworthily receive Him? *Judas* was the first who was guilty of this Sacrilege of an unworthy Communion; and all those who fall into it since, imitate his Example, and become his Disciples. They receive their Redeemer, as *Judas* did, in a guilty Soul: They betray him, not indeed to the *Jews*, but, which is worse, to the Devil, who dwells in them. What Punishment ought they not to dread from such an enormous Crime? Ought they not to remember, how that perfidious Apostle was immediately possessed by the Devil, in the Moment he received *Jesus Christ*? For since they imitate him in his Sin, they cannot avoid being Partakers of his Punishments.

If human Laws condemn a Person to Death for the Murder of another, can he expect less than eternal Death, who profanes the Body and Blood of his Lord and Saviour? What think you [Heb. x. 29] says the Apostle, does he deserve, who profanes the Blood of the New Testament, by which he has been sanctified? Nor has this Sin been without a particular Chastisement, even in this Life, according to that of St. Paul, [1 Cor. xi. 30.] that upon Account of their unworthy Communions, many Distempers reigned amongst those Christians, viz. the *Corinthians*, and that upon the same Account many were carried off by sudden and unprovided Death. The holy Fathers of the Church have not been less severe, in reprehending such Persons who approach unworthily to the holy Table, [See St. Chrys. Hom. de Prodit. Judæ. St. Bern. Ser. in Cœna. & S. Basil de Bap. L. 2.] nor have they given this Crime better Terms than the Apostle, since they compare it to that of the Executioners who crucified our Saviour, or to that of the Traitor *Judas*, who betrayed him into the Hands of his mortal Enemies.

St. *Cyprian* affirms, (L. de Lapsis.) that in his Time there were many whose Bodies were possessed by the Devil, for having communicated unworthily; and also that many had lost their Senses, and became distracted and mad, upon the same Account. And St. *Chrysostom* also assures us, that the same Thing happened in his Time. This, dear Christians, ought to be more than sufficient to make you deplore the unhappy Condition of those, who communicate unworthily, and make you to dread the falling into that unhappy State. And yet, alas! this horrid Sacrilege is very common in this our unhappy Age.

I could wish, dear Christians, being persuaded as I am, and as you ought to be, of the Enormity committed in an unworthy Communion; I say, I could heartily wish that it were not possible to justify what I have said; but alas! the Thing is too evident. I shall



shall leave you to judge of the Truth, after I have reckoned up some few of those, who communicate unworthily.

There are some who criminally neglect to be instructed in the principal Mysteries of our Faith; and not knowing the Excellency and Dignity of this august Mystery, yet they approach to this holy Table out of Custom, to receive this adorable Sacrament.

There are others who frequent this Sacrament at the Feast of *Easter*, out of human Respect, that they may not pass for wicked Christians in the Eyes of the World, though they are such in the Sight of God.

There are others, who indeed communicate often, but it is only to get the Praise and Esteem of Men, and to pass for Persons of Piety, though in the Sight of God they are no better than downright Hypocrites.

Others also go to this divine Banquet without the Wedding-Garment, I mean a Purity of Heart; and yet they have the Boldness to eat of the Bread of Angels, which requires an angelical Purity. 'Tis true, they have been at Confession, but they have not declared all their Sins, either for want of a due Examen, or else through Shame-facedness or Fear, having knowingly or willingly concealed some mortal Sin; which alone is sufficient to make their Confession null. But suppose Persons should have thoroughly examined their Consciences, and not conceal'd any mortal Sin, yet how few are there who confess their Sins with a true Sorrow, and a firm Purpose of Amendment for the future!

There are some again, who will not quit the immediate Occasions of their Sins, nor apply themselves with Care and Diligence to root out their Evil Habits; and this is the ordinary Cause of frequent Relapse. O God, the Number of false Penitents, and consequently of unworthy Communicants, are very great!

We may add to these, all those who go to Communion without having restored (when they had it in their Power) what belonged to another: As also such who approach to this adorable Sacrament with a Heart imbittered with Gall and Hatred against their Neighbour. What I have here numbered up already, abundantly sufficeth to prove, that though an unworthy Communion is the most enormous and detestable of all Crimes, yet it is very frequent.

Can you hear these Things without breaking forth into Tears? *St. Bernard* sighed and wept, when he reflected on the Number of unworthy Communicants at the Feast of *Easter*. 'What, says he, (Serm. in Coena Dom.) is it possible that the Time in which we commemorate the Mysteries of our Saviour's Resurrection, should be the Time of an infinite Number of Sacrileges, committed by unworthy Communicants?' Consider now, in what manner you have received the adorable Sacrament; see if you have not at any Time profaned this important Action, which requires all our Care and Application to prepare ourselves for it. See also, if after your Communion you have employed yourselves in Thanksgiving for so great a Benefit, and whether you have made use of so favourable a Time to beg of Almighty God those Helps which you stand in need of to preserve you from Sin. See also and examine, whether you have been that unhappy Person who should dare to communicate in the State of mortal Sin.

*St. Chrysostom* exhorting the People of *Constantinople*, to communicate often, recommends to them above all Things, a Purity of Heart, in receiving this Bread of Angels. I beg the same of you, dear Christians, and conjure you by the Love you bear to *Jesus Christ*, and the Care and Zeal you have for your own Salvation, never to commit a crime so enormous as that of an unworthy Communion; and if you have ever been so miserable and unhappy as

to have been guilty of it, to pass the Remainder of your Lives in a Series of Penance, to expiate so great a Crime; and resolve, that you will never be so wicked as hereafter to communicate in the State of mortal Sin.

If I what I have said already be not sufficient to imprint in you as great a Horror as I could wish, against an unworthy Communion, let at least this terrible Example, which St. Cyprian relates, (L. de Lapsis) of which he was an Eye-Witness, move you. 'There was a Woman, says he, who presented herself to receive the holy Eucharist, but she was so far from finding the comfortable Effects of this Sacrament, that it was to her a mortal Poison, which took away her Life; for the precious Body and Blood of our Lord, says he, remaining in her Throat, choaked her, so that she immediately died upon the Spot.'

But it is not enough for us, dear Christians, barely to consider what this Woman, and a great many others have suffered, but what we ourselves have deserved, if we have ever been so criminal as to approach to this holy Table in the State of mortal Sin: Nor must you live in Security, if your Punishment is deferred, but on the contrary, look upon the Vengeance of God, hanging over your Heads, to be so much the more terrible, by how much the mercy of God has waited for your Repentance. For it is particularly of this great Act of our Religion, that those Words of the Holy Scripture are to be understood, *Cursed is he, who does the Work of God negligently.* (Jerem. xlviii. 10.)

Now, if to perform any holy Action negligently, be so great a Sin as to draw down the Judgments of God, what dreadful Judgments must those expect who communicate unworthily?

You must not think that I say this to retard you from approaching to the holy Sacrament of the Altar; no, on the contrary, I have too great a Desire for

the Salvation of your Souls, than offer to deprive you of so great a Blessing; and could wish that you would approach oftner than you usually do, provided it were with due Dispositions.

I cannot conclude without once more laying before you, in few Words, the Dispositions with which you ought to approach to this holy Table, which I cannot do better, than by the Exhortation made by St. Paul to the Hebrews, (Heb. x. 22.) *Let us approach to the Table of the Lord with a sincere Heart, not full of Malice and Hypocrisy, but with a full Faith; that is to say, firm and entire; but above all, having your Hearts purified and cleansed from all Sin.* And thus disposed, let us not fail of approaching, with the Sentiments of a holy Fear and a most profound Respect for this adorable Sacrament. For our God, says the Apostle, is a consuming Fire, which will certainly be your Ruin, if you approach to him rashly; but rather look upon yourselves as Persons who are entirely unworthy, saying not only with your Lips, but from your Hearts, *Lord I am not worthy.* Strive then, dear Christians, to bring to this divine Banquet the greatest Purity of Heart that is possible; lest the Master of the Family, finding you without this nuptial Robe, should order you to have your Hands and Feet tied, and so cast into utter Darkness, I mean eternal Flames. Purify then your Hearts not only from the Filth of Mortal Sin, as you are obliged to do, but even from venial Sins, to the end that you may avoid, not only the dreadful Consequences of an unworthy Communion, but also may partake more abundantly of the Graces of this divine Sacrament, and have a Part in that great Recompence which the Son of God has promised to those who shall eat this heavenly Bread with holy Dispositions.

DISC.



## DISC. I.

## On the SACRAMENT of PENANCE.

*Unless you do Penance, you shall all perish. Luke xiii. 3.*

THERE is no Point of our Religion better established, and more universally acknowledged, than the Obligation of Penance. 'Tis the Subject of our daily Prayers; 'tis the constant Theme of all Instructions and Sermons; and in Effect the whole Business of the Gospel; yet in regard of Practice, no Part of our Duty seems to be less understood, and worse performed. Some place it entirely in the inward Dispositions of the Soul, others rely too much upon outward Performances, and few enter so far into it as to comply with the Practice of it as they ought. To remove therefore the Mistake which may happen on this Occasion, I intend in this Discourse to lay before you the Necessity of Penance in general, and in what it consists. But before I proceed upon these two Points, it will be proper first to prove to you in short, that Penance is a Sacrament of the new Law, instituted by *Christ*, for the Remission of Sins committed after Baptism, whereby they who are baptized are restored again unto Grace, when they have lost it by mortal Sin.

Penance may be considered two Ways; as it is a *Virtue*, and as it is a *Sacrament*. As a *Virtue*, it was always necessary, even before our Saviour taught his Gospel, and instituted the Holy Sacraments; and according to this Acceptation, Divines define it thus: A Virtue or Gift of God, which makes us deplore and hate the Sins we have committed, with a firm Purpose or Resolution to amend, and not offend any more for the future; and to punish ourselves, and make Satisfaction for the Sins committed. And here you must take Notice that *Repentance* is not altogether

ther the same as *Penance* ; for Repentance is commonly used to signify the Sorrow, and the Change of Life : But Penance, over and above, includes the penal or penitential Works, by which a true Penitent endeavours to punish himself, and to satisfy, as much as in him lies, the divine Justice, for the Offences committed. Its principal Acts are *Contrition*, *Confession*, and *Satisfaction*.

As these three Acts compose the Virtue of Penance, so they also make the Parts of the Sacrament of Penance, which *Christ* has instituted upon this Virtue, and raised to the Dignity of a Sacrament, when he gave to his Apostles, and their Successors, Power to remit Sins in his Name, and by his Authority.

The Words of this Institution are these, spoken by *Christ* to his Apostles when he appeared to them, on the Day of his Resurrection : (John xx. 22.) *As my Father has sent me, even so I send you : Receive you the Holy Ghost : Whose Sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose Sins you shall retain they are retained.* You see, dear Christians, by these Words, that *Christ* gave to his Apostles and their Successors, a Power to remit, and to retain the Sins of the Faithful. And is it not also evident, that *Christ* has constituted the Pastors of his Church the Ministers of this Power for the Pardon of Sin ? Hear what *Christ* says in the 18th Chapter of St. *Matthew* (Verse 18.) *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven ; and whatsoever you shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.*

Now, since *Christ* has instituted the Pastors, of his Church, the Ministers of this Sacrament, it evidently follows, that it is the Will of God they should administer it ; and so it is the Will of God, that the Faithful should apply themselves to the Pastors, by whom it is to be administered. And since the Power given, is of Binding or Loosing, of Remitting, or Retaining, they ought to execute this

this Power justly, that is, pronounce such a Judgment as may be approved by God, and confirmed in Heaven: This must be by remitting, when the Sinner is truly penitent; and retaining, when he is unworthy of Forgiveness. But how can they be capable of pronouncing justly, unless the Case of the Penitent be truly stated to them, and the Dispositions of his Heart made known to them? Therefore since, by God's Appointment, they are made the Judges of our Souls, by the same Appointment they are to know what they judge: For a Judge cannot give Sentence in a Cause if he knows it not; and this cannot be but by the Confession of the Penitent becoming his own Accuser, and laying open his Conscience to them. You see therefore, that it is the Appointment and Will of God, that Penitents should confess their Sins, and open the true State of their Conscience to the Pastors of his Church, that so they may judge, and that what they forgive on Earth may be forgiven in Heaven. This the Apostle *St. James* declares in giving this general Command, *Confess your Sins to one another.* (Ch. iii. 16.) To whom then must this Confession be made, but to those to whom *Christ* had given Power to hear, judge, and forgive Sins?

But perhaps it may be objected, That it is going to Man for the Pardon of Sins committed against God; and therefore, 'tis forsaking God, and making Gods of Men. To which I answer, 'Tis going to the Pastors of the Church, as God has ordered us so to do; and to obey the Orders of God, cannot be forsaking God, but seeking him, even according to his own Appointment. Did *Cornelius* forsake God, when by God's Direction he addrested himself to *St. Peter*, to be taught what he ought to do (Acts x. 5.) If then Sinners are informed by *Christ* himself, where he has given Power for the Pardon of Sins, to make Application there for the Pardon of their Sins, it can be no more forsaking God, than to wash in



*Jordan* for the Relief of a Distemper, when he himself has given Direction for it.

I grant, the Power of forgiving Sins is a divine Power, but will any one deny, that God cannot execute this Power by his Ministers, as well as immediately by himself? To suppose this Power in Man, as his own, and from himself, would be so far equalling him with God: But for Man to administer this Power, in Virtue of a Deputation from God, is not to make him God, but only the Minister of God. And in this there can be no Surprize; for is not original Sin, and sometimes other Sins, forgiven by the Sacrament of Baptism? And is not that Person, who administers Baptism, the Minister of that Power by which these Sins are forgiven? If then the Forgiveness of Sins, by the Ministry of the Priest in Baptism, is so easily allowed, why should it be made a Subject of Surprize and Scandal in other Cases, where the Power is more expressly given by *Christ* himself?

The Catholick Church teaches, That *Christ* has left Power to the Ministers of his Church, to absolve all Sinners who truly repent. And this the Protestants themselves seem to understand in the same manner as we, since in their Common Prayer-Book, in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, we find this Rubric: *Here shall the sick Person be moved to make a special Confession of his Sins, if he feels his Conscience troubled with any weighty Matter; after which Confession the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this Manner:*  
 “ Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who hath left Power to  
 “ his Church to absolve all Sinners, who truly re-  
 “ pent and believe in him, of his great Mercy for-  
 “ give thee thy Offences: And by his Authority  
 “ committed to me, *I absolve thee from all thy Sins,*  
 “ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and  
 “ of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*” Therefore, for the future, I hope no Protestant will be surprised,



call in Question, and be scandalised at Catholics, who believe, and do no more, than what they themselves have here prescribed in their Common Prayer-Book.

There are some who deny this Power, by pretending that *Christ* did not confer upon his Apostles, and their Successors, a Power to forgive Sins, but only a Power to declare Remission of Sins. Nothing can be more contrary to the plain Words of the Institution than this; For *Christ* did not say, *Whose Sins you shall declare remitted, are remitted*; but he said, *Whose Sins you shall remit, are remitted*. Besides, to what Purpose should *Christ* give such a Power of declaring Sins remitted, since such a Declaration would effect nothing in order to Remission of Sins? So that a Man, to whom such a Declaration is made, shall remain in Sin, as much after the Declaration as before. Again: *Christ*, after he invested the Apostles, and consequently their Successors, with the Power of Remitting and Retaining, said to them (John xx.) *As my Father sent me, so I send you*. Now 'tis certain, *Christ* was sent by his Father, endued with Power truly to remit Sins, and not only to declare Remission of Sins. Whereby it is evident, that *Christ* sent his Apostles invested with Power to remit Sins, giving unto them, says St. Paul (1 Cor. v.) the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Again: Penance has all the Requisites necessary to a Sacrament, viz. outward Rites or Signs, Promise of sanctifying Grace, and the Institution of *Christ*. The outward and visible Sign in this Sacrament, is the Confession of the Sinner, and the Words of Absolution pronounced by the Priest: For to the end that a Crime may be remitted, Reason requires that one should confess it, in order to make the Quality of the Crime manifest to him who is to remit it, and also that he who hath Authority to remit it, should pronounce the Sentence of Absolution, after he has judged concerning the Nature of the Crime.

The



*sion of Heart, a Reconciliation with God, to have been the constant Subject of their Mission. I need say nothing of the holy Fathers, Doctors, and Preachers of the Catholick Church; serious Penance, a sincere Repentance, is what their Homilies and Sermons are full of.*

Thus you see (if the greatest Authority have weight with you, as certainly it ought, (That the Necessity of Penance has been preached by the Mouth of every Prophet, urged by St. *Jahn Baptist*, repeated by *Christ* himself, pressed by the greatest Apostles, inculcated by the Voice of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; such a Number of unquestionable Testimonies, and undeniable Authorities is more than sufficient to convince every Christian of the Necessity of Penance.

Let us now reason a little on this Point. There are only two Ways that can lead us to Heaven, that of *Innocence*, and that of *Penance*. The State of Innocence, or of original Justice, all Mankind lost by original Sin; and tho' the Guilt of that Sin be taken away by Baptism, yet the Life of every one, in this State of Corruption, ought to be a Life of Penance; 'tis what the Church declares, in the general Council of *Trent*: *The Life of every Christian ought to be a perpetual Practice of Penance.* 'Tis no more than the express Doctrine of our Saviour *Christ*, in the 13th Chapter of St. *Luke* (Verse 3.) where he says to his Disciples, *Unless you do Penance, you shall all perish.* There is no Christian but will find himself indispensibly obliged to a Life of Penance, if he considers the Sins he has committed, the Dangers he stands always exposed to; and if he looks upon the Life of our Saviour *Christ* (which every one who pretends to be saved must) as a Pattern he should endeavour to imitate. Reflect a little on these Reasons.

Where is that happy Mortal to be found, who has not committed many Sins in his Life-time, and who does not now offend, in some Point or other, less or  
more

more, againſt the infinite Maieſty of God? Does not St. James expreſſy declare in his Catholick Epistle, (Ch. iii. 22.) that *we all of us offend in many Things?* St. John alſo tells us, (Ch. i.) that *if we ſay we have no Sin we deceive ourſelves, and the Truth is not in us.* 'Tis true, we are apt in this Kind to deceive ourſelves, though not to ſuch a Degree as to make us imagine we have always been free from Sin; yet our Paſſions blind our Reaſon; Self-love makes us partial Judges to ourſelves, hides from us a great Part of our Failings, ſo that every one has juſt Reaſon to ſay with the penitent Pſalmiſt, *Who is there that perfectly ſees, and underſtands his own Failings and Sins?* Nay, the Holy Ghoſt aſſures us, in the 9th Chapter of Eccleſiaſticus, that *No Man knows whether he be worthy of Love or Hatred,* whether he is in the Grace or Favour of God, or no. Even the moſt pious, and moſt virtuous Chriſtians, are never abſolutely certain, whether they are free from deadly Sin or not, whether they are in the State of Salvation or Damnation. Since therefore ſuch is the Condition of every one, that he is certain he has committed many Sins, and knows not whether he has deſerved Pardon for them, or not: Since he may reaſonably judge that he has fallen into many Faults, which in himſelf he has not diſcovered: Since, in fine, he is always uncertain as to his preſent Condition, whether he be in the Favour of God or no: Has not, I ſay, every one great Reaſon, upon theſe very Accounts, to live always in the Practice and Exercise of Penance? eſpecially ſince, as St. Auguſtin obſerves (De neceſſitate Pœnitent.) there is no Sin but muſt of Neceſſity be puniſhed, either by our voluntary Penance, or by the Juſtice of God. For, as St. John ſays in his Revelations (C. xxi.) *Nothing that is defiled with Sin can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* As all Men therefore are Sinners, all without Exception muſt of Neceſſity repent, and do Penance for their Sins.

Again;



Again: You ought to live always in the Practice of Penance, by Reason of the Dangers and Temptations which, as long as you live you will always stand exposed to. Such is the Weakness of our corrupt Nature, that we have always divers inordinate Passions to struggle with, and many depraved Inclinations to fight against. Even the most virtuous, find by Experience in themselves, a Load of Corruption, a very great Backwardness to Good, and a propense Inclination to Evil. The Spirit must always fight against the Flesh, as the Flesh, and its Passions, always make War against the Spirit, as St. Paul tells us. (Gal. v. 17.)

To say nothing of the other formidable Enemies of your Salvation, the World with its dangerous Principles, false Maxims, and corrupt Customs, which lead you to Sin. To say nothing of the continual Assaults of the common Enemy of Mankind, the Devil who goes always about laying his Snares, and seeking Means to draw you into Damnation.

Now, in order to curb this Inclination to Sin, grafted in your very Nature; to strengthen you against your unruly Passions; to secure you against so many Dangers and Temptations, you are bound to live always in a continual Practice of Penance: So that it is with good Reason that *Tertullian* says, (Lib. de Penitent.) *Man is born to do Penance.*

Besides, 'tis in vain for you to pretend to Salvation, unless you endeavour to imitate the Example of your blessed Redeemer. *Those whom God has chosen,* says St. Paul to the Romans (C. viii. 29.) *he has decreed, and predestinated, to be made like to the Image of his Son.* The Life of Christ was a Life of Penance, tho' he had no Sins of his own to satisfy for; he was only a Sinner in Appearance, and yet was a true Penitent during the whole Course of his Life. You, on the contrary, are truly Sinners, subject to many Sins; and yet I am afraid, you are only Penitents in Appearance.

pearance. Is this to follow his Example? Is this to imitate the Life of your Saviour? How different are your Lives from that of the Saints, who followed his Footsteps in the like Practice of a penitential Life! They declared War against their Passions; they fought manfully against their Temptations; they fled the Dangers of worldly Conversation; they lived in a continual Practice of Penance, Self-denial, and Mortification; the more they advanced in Virtue, their Penance was still greater and more severe; their Lives were more like to that of *Christ*. Can you then hope to be saved with them, and live after a quite different Manner? They had no other Way to Heaven but that of Penance, and 'tis the only Way for you to be saved.

These Reasons, dear Christians, which I have hitherto insisted on, shew that Penance is necessary for all without Exception; for good and virtuous Persons, as well as for Libertines and Sinners. In the mean time, give me Leave to put you in mind, that they who know themselves to have been guilty of great Sins, who have perhaps, frequently relapsed into the same Disorders, who have lived in a Custom and Habit of Vice; all such Persons are under a much greater Necessity and Obligation of doing Penance, and such a Penance as may have some Proportion to their past Offences. A State of Penance for them is altogether unavoidable; they must, nay, and certainly will be Penitents; only it is now left to their own Choice, whether here or hereafter, whether in this World or the next; that is to say, in Hell. Yes, dear Christians, Hell is as full of Penitents as it is full of damned Souls; Sinners there, heartily repent themselves of their past Follies and their past Crimes; they must there undergo a most severe and endless Penance for their past Offences. Chuse then your Penance, if you can doubt and demur upon the Choice; only remember, that of the next World is a fruitless, unprofitable, insupportable, and eternal Penance;

Penance ; but if you are for doing a short Penance in this World, and yet such a Penance as may satisfy the divine Justice for your past Sins, and secure your eternal Salvation, 'tis necessary to examine in what this Penance consists.

Penance, even as it is used in holy Scripture, has different Significations. 'Tis often made Use of to imply no more than a mere Repentance ; as in common Discourse we say, that a Man repents himself of what he has done ; and thus, as I have already observed, the damned Souls in Hell are said to do Penance ; thus *Judas* in the Gospel is said to have been moved with Penance, when repenting himself for betraying his Lord and Master, he fell into Despair, and hanged himself for it. Such a Penance therefore, tho' never so great, viz. mere Repentance, is not sufficient ; 'tis indeed certain, that a true Penance, such as will justify you in the Sight of God, does always include a sincere Repentance : For Sinners must heartily repent themselves of what they have done ; they must be sorry, detest, and abhor their former Ways and Proceedings ; this is one necessary Disposition, but this is not all.

Such a Penance then as God requires at your Hands, includes divers Dispositions and Affections of your Soul ; it must not only be joined with a true Faith, and accompanied with a Hope of receiving Pardon, but also, of its own Nature, it necessarily includes a Change and Conversion of Heart. A Sinner who returns to God, must of necessity leave off the Affections to Sin ; he must become a new Man ; he must *put off the old Man* with his Works, according to the Expression of *St. Paul*, and he must *put on the new Man*, which is according to the Spirit of God. His Affections, his Actions, his Life, his Conversation, must be quite different from what they were before. This is what Almighty God puts Sinners in mind of by his Prophet *Jeremy* (C. xxvi. 3.) *Let every one return from his Evil Ways* ; this is what he



he tells us by his Prophet *Joel* (C. ii. 12.) *Be converted to me with your whole Hearts.* True Penance therefore includes an entire Conversion of the Heart, and such a Change in the Will, that the Sinner leave off all Affection to Sin, especially to all mortal and deadly Sin without Exception; otherwise it is no Change, no Conversion, no Penance, that will avail any thing.

Besides this, true Penance not only makes the Penitent separate his Affections from Sin, but also makes him firmly resolve to avoid all Occasions of Sin. A true, a sincere Penitent, looks upon those dangerous Occasions, in which his Frailty has been overcome, with the same Fear and Apprehension as a Mariner looks at those Rocks, Shelves, or Sands on which he has before suffered Shipwreck, and been in Danger of his Life; and therefore is resolved to avoid them for the future. He looks upon his infirm Will like a Torch that is but newly blown out, and which with every Blast of Wind takes Fire and flames again. Doubtless such Sinners, as have had too much Experience of their own Weakness, cannot walk with too great Caution; and if their Penance and Conversion be sincere, they must separate themselves from all immediate Occasions and Dangers of Sin.

True Penance includes yet another Condition and Disposition; that is, it must not only be accompanied with such a Repentance, such a Sorrow, Detestation, and such a firm Purpose of avoiding all Sin, and all Occasions of Sin, such a Change and Conversion of Heart as I have already mentioned; but it must also have a Will of satisfying the divine Justice by penitential Works. A Sinner who is truly penitent, thinks all he can do or suffer, nothing in Comparison of what he has deserved by his Offences; he looks upon the Remainder of his Life too short to make a Reparation for the Injuries he has committed against the divine Majesty: He blesses the  
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infinite Mercies of God, who has preserved him from the Jaws of Hell, which he has so often deserved; and who has been pleased to change the eternal Punishments due to his Sins, into a short temporal Punishment; and in Hopes that the Goodness of God will spare him in the next Life, he is resolved not to spare himself in this.

I do not deny but that a Sinner may be reconciled to God by a true and sincere Penance, before he has made sufficient Satisfaction for his Offences. A true Penitent may be snatched away by Death, when he has done, perhaps, little or no Penance for many and grievous Sins; he must expect a temporary Punishment in another World: But in the mean time, there can be no true Penance without a Will at least, and a Desire, which the penitent must have, of repairing the Injury done to Almighty God by Sin; of satisfying the divine Justice, and of punishing himself by Works of Penance and Mortification, for the Offences which he has committed. Hence you may understand several dangerous Mistakes, relating to the necessary Dispositions for the Sacrament of Penance. Many Persons are apt to imagine, that it is enough for them to examine and confess the Sins they find themselves guilty of; this is to be done, but this alone will not suffice. Others perhaps, besides this, use some Endeavours to be sorry for their Sins; such a Sorrow is absolutely necessary, but neither Confession nor Sorrow for past Sins, is sufficient to make a true Penitent. Others perhaps join to these, a Purpose to avoid Sin and the Occasions of it, as they ought to do; but they think little of doing Works of Penance, worthy Fruits of Penance, to satisfy for their past Sins, and preserve them for the future; without this, their Penance is still defective.

To give you therefore a clear and full Account in what a true and perfect Penance consists, it must comprehend these Dispositions. 1<sup>st</sup>, A sincere Conversion of Heart, by which the Penitent is sorry for all the Sins he has committed, as being contrary to the

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the Will and Pleasure of Almighty God. *2dly*, It requires an entire and exact Confession of all the Offences, of which, after a due Examination, he finds himself guilty of. *3dly*, It must be accompanied with a firm Purpose and Resolution to avoid Sin, and the dangerous Occasions of it. *4thly*, He that is truly penitent, must have an Intent to satisfy the divine Justice for his past Crimes, and must make it his serious Endeavour to join Works of Penance, Self-denial, and Mortification, and punish himself for his former Transgressions. These are all necessary Dispositions in a true Penitent.

Reflect now a little, dear Christians, upon yourselves: Has your Penance been always accompanied with these Conditions? Have you never been deficient in any of these Points? Such a Penance is, perhaps, what God has a long Time expected from you. Remember, that the Practice of a penitential Life is absolutely necessary for you, whatever your Lives have been; but if you have had the Misfortune to be engaged in Habits and Customs of Sinning, you ought then to reflect that your Penance must in some Measure be proportioned to your Sins: And let me tell you, that all you can do and suffer, can never make sufficient Satisfaction and Atonement for the Guilt of one mortal Sin; you must therefore treat and punish yourselves as Criminals, who have deserved endless Punishments in the Flames of Hell, and whom the divine Mercy has preserved, that you might punish yourselves by worthy Fruits of Penance.

But let me exhort you, that your Penance be without Delay; do not, upon any Account, defer that Penance, which of Necessity you must do, either in this World or the next. You cannot do too soon, what must of Necessity be done; especially, since the longer you defer it, the Difficulty will be so much the greater; your Debts will increase, and with them an Obligation of a more severe Penance.

Follow

Follow the Admonition of the Holy Ghost, (Eccl. v. 8.) do not put off your Conversion from Time to Time, do not delay your Penance from Day to Day. The severest Penance you can undergo, will all seem nothing to you, if you set before your Eyes the Punishments you have deserved; and that a short Penance here, will secure you an eternal Happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

## DISC. II.

### ON CONTRITION.

*Be converted to me with your whole Heart.* Joel ii. 12.

**T**HE Sacrament of Penance (as I have shewed you, dear Christians, in the foregoing Discourse) is absolutely necessary for all Sinners, who by any Offence against the divine Majesty have lost the first Grace of Baptism. 'Tis for this Reason called by the Doctors of the Church, A laborious Baptism; that is, as the Sacrament of Baptism frees those who are born anew of Water and the Holy Ghost, from that *original Sin*, which we were all born in, so the Sacrament of Penance (but with much greater Difficulty on the Penitent's Side) is ordained to free Sinners from the Guilt of those *actual Sins*, which they have had the Misfortune to fall into, by the Perverseness of their own proper Will. For this Reason it is called by St. Hieron, (Ad Demetr.) The second Plank to save us after Shipwreck; that is, if by our own Neglect, and by our own Fault, we have fallen into any deadly Sin, and so made ourselves liable to eternal Misery in the bottomless Gulph of Hell, nothing remains but the Sacrament of Penance, to relieve our Souls, and to bring us to the happy Port of eternal Salvation.

Surely

Surely then, you cannot but admire the divine Goodness, and acknowledge your infinite Obligations to your merciful God, who has offered you so easy a Means to be reconciled to him (after you have been so ungrateful as to offend him) and provided you with so sovereign a Remedy, for all your Diseases. But alas! how many, out of a stupid Blindness, make this Sacrament of Reconciliation, a new Act of Condemnation against themselves? And tho' it is to be apprehended, that the Number of those, who having laid aside all Care and Concern for their Souls, totally neglect to make use of this Sacrament, is very great; yet it is much more to be feared, that the Number of those who abuse this Sacrament, to their own Ruin and Destruction, through the want of a sufficient Preparation, and due Dispositions for the receiving of it, far exceeds the former.

Three Considerations therefore are necessary, on the Part of the Penitent, to receive the Effects of this Sacrament, *viz.* *Contrition* of Heart, *Confession* of Mouth, and *Satisfaction* of Works. All these three are necessary, whensoever you pretend to make your Peace with God, and be reconciled to him, by a true Conversion. Yet I am afraid, the most common Defect, which often makes Penance unprofitable, and even criminal and sacrilegious in the Sight of God, is the want of a true Sorrow and Contrition of Heart. If we look into the common Practice of Christians when they come to the Sacrament of Penance, we shall find that they spend the greatest Part of that little Time which they take to prepare themselves, in examining and finding out their Sins; and then, if they confess what they remember, and receive Absolution, they think all secure enough; whereas they ought to be full as solicitous, and take as much or more Time in endeavouring to enter into the Dispositions of a true Conversion, a hearty Sorrow, and a firm Purpose and Resolution of Amendment. For it is certainly a much easier Thing for



a Man to find out his Sins, than to have a true Sorrow and a sincere Conversion of Heart; without which, instead of receiving any Benefit by the Sacrament, he adds a new Sacrilege, he flatters himself with a false Peace, a pretended Conversion, and he returns more guilty than before.

There is no Part of Penance of greater Importance than this of a true Sorrow, which we call *Contrition*. I shall therefore endeavour to shew you what *Contrition* is, by the Conditions which ought to accompany it. 2dly. I will propose some Motives, which every Penitent may make use of in order to obtain this necessary Contrition, or Sorrow for his Sins, before he goes to Confession.

A true Sorrow for our Sins, whether we give it the Name of *Contrition* or *Attrition*, must of Necessity be accompanied with these Conditions; it must be *interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign*; it ought also to be *effectual*. The Council of Trent, (Sess. 14. C. 4) defines Contrition, in as much as it is a Part of the Sacrament of Penance, *A Grief and Detestation of the Heart for Sins committed, with a firm Purpose and Resolution of sinning no more. First, It must be Interior*; that is, from the Heart; therefore Almighty God says, by the Mouth of his Prophet, (Ezek. xviii. 31.) *Cast away all your Prevarications, wherein you have prevaricated, and make to yourselves a new Heart and a new Spirit.* Many deceive themselves in this Point; they imagine their Business done, when they have read over an Act of Contrition or two, which they have in their Prayer Book, tho' in their Hearts they still retain the same criminal Affections to Creatures, and cherish their darling Passions as before. They pretend to repent, and will say they are sorry with all their Hearts that they have offended God; they will sigh, and give several exterior Signs of Grief, but all this is nothing, if they come not from the Heart, God will have no Regard to them, they are no better than Illusions; and such

as content themselves with them, shall have their Portion with Hypocrites; for our Saviour himself assures us, (Mat. xv. 19.) that it is *from the Heart that Sin takes its rise*: From the Heart, says he, proceeds evil Thoughts, Murders, Adultery, Fornication, Theft, &c. 'Tis to the Heart therefore, that this Grief must penetrate, to destroy and abolish those Works of Darkness, the Foulness of which, Floods of Tears will not be able to wash away, if they have not their Rise and Beginning from the Heart. Take care therefore, that your Grief and Sorrow for having offended God, be not in outward Shew and Appearance only; which can only serve to delude you for the present, but will in the End prove to your eternal Ruin. Ah, dear Christians! why should you be so desirous to deceive yourselves, when you are certain to be Losers by it, since you cannot deceive God, though you may impose upon your ghostly Father?

The *second* Condition that must accompany your Contrition, is, that it be *supernatural*; that is, it must be a Sorrow and Detestation for the Sins you confess, in as much as they are Sins and Offences against the infinite Majesty of God. 'Tis not enough to be sorrowful for your Offences, by Reason of the natural Deformity and Baseness of Sin, nor by Reason of the Shame and Confusion which they bring to the Sinner, nor for any temporal Inconveniencies which may follow from Sin as to this Life; but it must of Necessity be a Sorrow which is grounded upon some supernatural Motive, with a Regard to Eternity. A Person therefore, must not content himself to be sorrowful for his Sins, because they make him guilty of Hell Fire; but he must make it his serious Endeavour, that his Sorrow be for the Love of God. I shall not pretend to determine, whether it be sufficient to detest Sin merely for Fear of eternal Punishments, and because mortal Sin makes a Sinner guilty of Hell Fire, or whether it be not  
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always necessary that this Sorrow be accompanied with the Love of God above all Things; I shall not, I say, determine, what the Church has not decided. 'Tis indeed certain, that a lively Fear of Hell and Damnation is a good and profitable Motion of the Soul; 'tis a Gift of God; and we may call it, with the *Psalmist*, *The Beginning of Wisdom*. But in the mean time, 'tis a certain and unquestionable Truth, that every penitent Sinner ought seriously to endeavour to be heartily sorry for all his Offences, because they are contrary to the Will of God, who has been infinitely good and merciful towards him; who is the Source and Fountain of all that is good, and who, upon a thousand Titles, deserves to be loved above all Things; especially since the Apostle *St. Paul*, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, (Ch. xiii.) assures us, that the most heroical Virtues, even the severest Martyrdom, is of no Value without Charity; that is, without the Love of God: Since the same *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) again pronounces *Anathema*, an eternal Curse and Separation from God, upon every one who does not love our Lord *Jesus Christ*. To insist only upon what our Faith teaches us; your Sorrow and Grief for your Sins, for having offended so good a God, for having forfeited his Grace and lost his Favour, ought to be greater as to its Effect, than any Sorrow or Grief for any other Loss whatsoever. As the Favour of God ought to be esteem'd above any temporal Happiness, above all the Goods of this Life; and as Sin is of all Evils and Misfortunes the greatest, so you ought certainly to hate Sin above all Things, to fear Sin more than any thing else, and to prefer the Grace of God before all the Satisfaction and Pleasures of this World; before any Happiness which this Life can afford. Without this Disposition, you live in the Affection to Sin, and you want that true Sorrow which is absolutely necessary to be in the Grace of God.

'Tis true, you may be more sensibly afflicted for some temporal Loss; you may experience a more feeling Sorrow for the Death of a Parent, Friend, or Relation, or some Misery that happens to you in this Life: but you cannot be in the Disposition of a true Sorrow and Contrition, unless you be in a Readiness of Mind, and willing to lose all that is dear to you in this World, sooner than lose the Grace of God by offending his divine Majesty; unless you fear and detest Sin more than Poverty, Sickness, Death itself, or any Misery that can happen to you. There is no Catholick but is sufficiently convinced, that he ought to lose all that he enjoys in this Life, and deny himself all the Satisfaction this World can afford, sooner than renounce his Faith and Religion: And his Reason, as well as his Faith teaches him, that he ought in like manner to resolve to undergo all Inconveniencies whatsoever, rather than forfeit the Grace and Favour of God by any mortal Sin.

Examine now the Dispositions of your Hearts and Affections. Did you never come to the Sacrament of Penance, without this necessary Sorrow, and hearty Detestation of all deadly Sin? Is every one, at this present, fully resolved upon no Account whatever to break the Commandments of God, and his Church, tho' it were to gain the whole World? You cannot pretend to look upon God as your Chief Good, unless you look upon Sin as the greatest Evil. Can you say with the Prophet *Jeremy*, that *your Grief and Sorrow for Sin, is above all Grief and Sorrow whatever?* How far from these Dispositions are all such Sinners who shew so little Concern for the Grace of God, who live in such a Coldness and Indifference as to the State of mortal Sin, who make so little Account of offending God? They have frequently, perhaps, made use of the Sacrament of Penance, pretended to be sincerely converted to God, and upon every slight Occasion, at the Return of the next Temptation, have forsaken God, to gratify their

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Passions,



Passions, for some short Pleasure, or for some temporal Advantage. Have we not just Reason to fear, they never scarce had this hearty Contrition, this supernatural and sincere Detestation of Sin above all Things? The Use therefore of the Sacrament of Penance to them, has been nothing but a sacrilegious Abuse, an Increase of Guilt instead of Pardon.

A *third* Condition which your Contrition must have, is, that it be *universal*; that is to say, extending itself to all mortal Sins, without excepting any one: So that your Sorrow for what is past, and your Resolution for the Time to come, must be without Exception, as to the Breach of any one of God's Commandments. In this 'tis ordinary enough for Sinners to deceive themselves; there are many Persons who have divers good Qualities, they perform a number of good Works, they are free from many Vices which others are subject to: but still they have some predominant Inclination, some favourite Passions, and those considerable too, which from Time to Time make them lose the Grace and Favour of God; and 'tis much to be feared, especially if they have contracted a Custom and Habit of such particular Sins, that they do not sufficiently quit the Affection to such Vices, and they have too much Reason to suspect their Purposes and Resolutions in regard of those Offences. Thus, for instance, you may find many Persons who shew Piety enough in their Prayers and Devotions, they are good and charitable to the Poor, they do Justice to their Neighbour in every Respect; but as for Intemperance, and Excess in Drinking, this is still their Vice. Others abstain from Drinking, from Cursing, Swearing, and Detracting their Neighbour; they keep all the other Commandments, only they break the sixth; they are Slaves to some Spirit of Uncleanness, either in Words or Actions. Others again live chaste, temperate, wrong no body, but they have a wicked ungovernable Tongue; lying, swearing, or detract-

ing, has been their long Practice; and they offend in this kind as often as the Occasion presents itself. All these Persons have divers good and commendable Dispositions, but in the mean time they are Slaves to some particular Vices, they have some predominant Passion which they never destroy. They are like the Kings of *Judah*, whom we read of in 3d (3 Reg. xv.) and 4th (4 Reg. 14.) Books of *Kings*; several of them, as *Asa*, *Josaphat*, *Azarias*, and *Jotham*, are commended for having done that which was right in the Sight of God; but the Character of each of them is with this Exception, that they left some Idols undestroyed. These are like *Saul*, who, as we read in the first Book of *Kings*, having received Orders from Almighty God to fight and destroy the *Amalekites*, without sparing any thing that belonged to them, *Saul* fought and conquered them, but he spared *Agag* their King, and received the best and richest Spoils. Almighty God was so highly offended at this, that he sent *Samuel* the Prophet, to acquaint *Saul*, that by his not obeying God fully, as he was commanded, he and all his Posterity had forfeited the Kingdom of *Israel*, and lost the Favour of God. Thus God's Command to every one is, that we utterly destroy all his and our Enemies, without sparing any thing that is displeasing in his Sight. But alas! many there are who only obey him by Halves, who always spare some favourite Vice, as *Saul* did *Agag*, and by this Disobedience they lose the Favour and Grace of God.

You ought to reflect, that you must obey Almighty God, no less in one Commandment than in all the rest; you must destroy in your Souls all his Enemies, without Reserve or Exception; that is, you must equally detest all your Sins, and make a firm Purpose to avoid whatever is a Breach of any of his Precepts. Remember the Admonition of St *James* in his catholick Epistle (Ch. ii. 10); *He that*  
*offends*

*offends in one Point of the Law, is guilty of all;* that is, he has as certainly lost the Grace of God, and forfeited his Title to Heaven, as if it were by a Breach of all. The Reason is evident, because Almighty God equally commands them all; and therefore, if a Man complies only with some of God's Commandments, and excepts others, he observes none as he ought, *viz*, for the Sake and Love of God.

A true and sincere Penitent, ought to use more Diligence in raising himself to a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for those Sins, which he knows himself frequently guilty of, in making a firm Purpose to resist those Passions by which he has been oftentimes overcome: 'Tis for want of this Care, that his Sorrow is deficient, and the greatest and most dangerous Enemies of his Soul continue and remain undestroy'd. Whensoever therefore you come to the Sacrament of Penance, you must come with a hearty Sorrow and sincere Detestation of all your Sins, without Exception; and you must use your chief Endeavours to be sorrowful for those Offences and Failings, which you find yourselves most subject to.

The *fourth* Condition your Contrition must have, is, that it be *sovereign*; that is, your Hatred and Detestation for Sin must be greater than for any other Evil whatsoever. But here you must take notice, that when it is said, your Sorrow and Detestation for Sin must be greater than for any other Evil, it is not to be understood, that it ought to be more sensible and vehement; for this is not required, nor is it always in your Power; but it is to be understood, that you esteem and look upon Sin as the greatest of all Evils, as it really is, and so firmly resolve for the future, not to commit it upon any Account whatsoever.

True Contrition, besides these four Conditions already mentioned, is likewise *effectual*. And if Sinners find by Experience, that their Contrition has no

Effect in order to a Change and Amendment of Life, they have too much Reason to suspect the Sincerity of their Sorrow, and firm Purpose of Amendment, which they pretended to make. I don't deny, but that a Person may sometimes fall, and relapse into the same Disorders, yet not for a want of a true and sincere Sorrow, when he came to the Sacrament of Penance. A Surprise, a strong and violent Temptation, together with human Frailty, may possibly overcome a penitent Sinner, and change his Will and Affections, which before were sincere: But if from Time to Time, from Confession to Confession, he still appears the same sinful Man, still repeating the same mortal Sins; if he presently returns to the same mortal Sins, if he scarce ever resisted the like Temptations, if he has not avoided the dangerous Occasions of his Sins, if he had done little or no Penance for his past Offences, perhaps even neglected to make use of the Remedies prescribed him; if, I say, this be his Case, then both he and his Confessor have great Reason to suspect, that he was not before truly penitent, that he had only a half and imperfect Will of sinning no more; in a Word, that he wanted a true Sorrow and firm Purpose of Amendment.

Reflect a little, dear Christians, on the Matter. If a Sinner, after having had the Misfortune to lose the Grace of God, by several Offences, had been touched with a true Repentance of Heart; if he had conceived a sincere Detestation of Sin above all things; if he had been resolved to die, rather than commit the same Offences; is it likely, that he would so soon, and so easily, have returned to the same Sins, which is not so in other Cases? When a Person, for Example, is practically convinced of the Dangers, Inconveniencies and Miseries, which he had but lately escaped, and therefore has taken a firm Resolution to avoid them and the Occasions for the future: We don't find that he is so careless of his own Safety



Safety and Good ; we naturally seek what we truly love, and we fly from what we sincerely hate and detest. If therefore you loved God above all things, and hated Sin more than any thing whatsoever, how is it possible you should so quickly forsake God, and return to Sin ?

Besides, the Rule which our Saviour himself gives us, to judge of the Dispositions and Affections of our Soul, is by the Effects : The Tree is known by the Fruit it produces ; *a good Tree*, says our Saviour *Christ*, (St. Luke vi. 43.) *produces good Fruit* : Nay, he tells us that a good Tree cannot produce bad Fruit. If therefore a Sinner continues to produce bad Fruit, if his Works are still sinful, 'tis because the Tree is bad, 'tis because the Man himself, his Will and Affections are not changed, otherwise he would have brought forth good Fruit. Thus you see the Rule which our Saviour gives, to judge of the Dispositions of the Soul, is by the Effects ; and this is the best and most certain Rule for the Penitent to judge of himself, and the Confessor to judge of the Penitent.

You cannot therefore rely upon your past Sorrow, which has not been accompanied with any good Effect, especially when after many and dangerous Sins, no Change of Life, no Amendment appears : 'Tis then much to be feared, that an Inclination to sinning, by a Habit and Custom, had prevailed upon the Sinner's Will, that notwithstanding those Endeavours he made, when he came to the Sacrament of Penance, his Affections were never changed, his Contrition was ever defective, and served only to delude himself and deceive his Confessor. His Absolution therefore, in like Manner, was to no Effect, unless it was to increase his Guilt, and that of his easy and indulgent Confessor. For you must observe, that it is a Point of Faith, that it is not in the Power of a Priest, Bishop or Pope, to absolve and forgive

Sins, unless the Penitent be truly disposed, by a hearty Sorrow and full Purpose of Amendment.

But to close up this Point, let every one resolve with himself, never to approach to the Sacrament of Penance, without first making it his chief Endeavours to have a true Contrition; that is, to be sorry from the Bottom of his heart for all his Sins and Offences, with a full and firm Purpose to avoid them for the future. This Sorrow must be *interior*, that is, from the Heart. It must be *supernatural*, grounded upon the Fear of God, and joined with the Love of God above all things. It must be *universal*, extending to all your Sins, and Occasions of Sin, without Exception or Reserve. It must also be *sovereign*; that is your Hatred and Detestation for Sin must be greater, than for any other Evil whatsoever. In fine, it ought to be effectual and constant, such as may shew a Change and Amendment of Life. St. Gregory tells us, that to do Penance, is to deplore and lament the Sins we have committed, and not to commit again what before we deplored. But in order to obtain this necessary Contrition, I will now propose some Motives for the Instruction of every one.

'Tis to be feared, that there are several Persons who have Contrition in their Books, and yet want it in their Hearts: I mean, that there are many Persons in the World who before they come to Confession, run over, after a customary Manner, an Act of Contrition printed in their Prayer Books; and we may say of them, what our Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees, *This People honour me with their Lips, but their Hearts are far from me* (Matth. xv. 8.) 'Tis quite a different thing to say, or think in one's Mind, I am heartily sorry for my Sins and Offences, and I purpose, by the Grace of God, to avoid them for the Time to come; and to have these Dispositions fixed in the Will and in the Heart: Contrition may  
be

be in your Mouths and in your Imagination, and yet not reach the Affections of your Soul.

If you ask me then, What Endeavours and what Means every one must use, to obtain this true and necessary Contrition? I answer, *first*, That more Pains and greater Endeavours are necessary for some Persons, than others. Such pious and devout Souls, who truly fear and love God, who have a Horror for all mortal Sin, and therefore live without falling into any, as I don't question but a great many do; such devout Servants of God, tho' they have daily Failings and Imperfections to beg Pardon for, yet the chief Affections of their Souls being in the main fixt upon God as they ought to be, they can without any great Difficulty, by the Grace of God, make true Acts of Sorrow, and Detestation of Sin, of the Love of God, and the like; they are in the Habit of Grace, in the Habit of Charity, and so can more easily produce Acts of Virtue. Yet here I must put you in Mind, that whensoever you come to the Sacrament of Penance, tho' you have not fallen into any great Sin, tho' you have only lesser Failings, and venial Imperfections to accuse yourselves of, you must of Necessity have true Contrition, a sincere Sorrow for what you confess, and a firm Purpose to avoid them; otherwise, you want one of the necessary and essential Parts of the Sacrament of Penance, *viz.* Contrition, without which, it can be no Sacrament at all.

But now, as for such Sinners who are guilty of mortal Sin, and who have perhaps frequently relapsed into the same Sins, who have continued in the Habits of Vice, of Pride, Ambition, Revenge, of Swearing, Cursing, Lying, Detracting, Drinking, Cheating, Impurity, and the like; from whose Heart God has been long banished by Sin and Vice, and the Devil taken Possession of their Souls; such Persons cannot imagine, that it is so easy a Matter for them to enter into the Dispositions of a true Sorrow

and Contrition. 'Tis not a short Time spent after a cold and negligent Manner, nor the reading of an Act of Contrition, nor a slight Preparation that will do their Work; they have perhaps, for a long Time, been in quite contrary Dispositions to those they must now have, if they pretend to make their Peace with God. St. *Augustin* tells us, *That the Justification and Reconciliation of a Sinner is a greater Work than the Creation of the whole World.* And the Council of *Trent* declares, That Grace once lost after Baptism, is not to be recovered without great Labour, and many penitential Tears. Such Sinners therefore may assure themselves, that what they go about is a Work of great Difficulty, which requires a diligent Preparation, and a serious Application of their best and utmost Endeavours.

But to come to the Method and Means, which every Penitent may make use of, when he comes to the Sacrament of Penance. *First*, Every one ought to beg of Almighty God, by fervent and devout Prayer, that he would grant him a true Contrition; because Contrition is a Gift of God, which we cannot have of ourselves; and as Almighty God, out of his infinite Goodness, is pleased to give a good Spirit to those who ask it, as our Saviour himself assures us, (Luc. xi. 13.) so you must earnestly beg this Spirit of Sorrow and Compunction of your heavenly Father. *2dly*, You must endeavour to excite yourselves thereunto, by seriously considering the great Mischiefs and dreadful Miseries that Sin will bring upon your Heads, and the great Injury it does to God; and that you are thereby fallen under his heavy Displeasure, and liable to all those dreadful Curses which are pronounced against Sin and Sinners; and that nothing keeps you from eternal Torments, but the Mercy, Patience, and long Forbearance of God, which, if abused, may let you fall into that endless and insupportable Misery, of everlasting Flames.

Whosoever



Whosoever considers these Things, cannot surely but be very sorry for his past Sins and Offences. But another and better Motive for Sorrow for your Sins, is that which regards God; to be sorry that you have been so ungrateful, and injurious to his divine Majesty, who is infinitely good in himself, and has been so to you, by laying all possible Benefits, and Obligations upon you. For has not he created you to be happy with him? and when you had forfeited your Happiness, by *Adam's Sin*, did not his infinite Love and Goodness send his only-beloved Son, to become Man, and die as a Ransom for you? Besides these general Benefits to all Mankind, call to mind the particular Benefits and Favours he has been pleased to confer upon you from Time to Time, and above all, calling you to the true Faith. Ah dear Christians! can you reflect on all this, and not be sorry and grieved to your very Heart, that you should be so ungrateful and vile to him, who has been so good to you? These Motives, if seriously considered, ought certainly to move you to a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for all your Sins.

These, dear Christians, are the Dispositions of a true and sincere Penitent, and I hope they are yours, for they are absolutely necessary when you aim to make your Peace with God in the Sacrament of Penance; and if you continue in these Dispositions, they will unite your Souls to God, by his Grace in this World, and bring you to the Recompence of endless Glory in the next.

## D I S C. III.

## ON CONFESSION.

*He that hideth his wicked Deeds, shall not be directed; but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain Mercy.* Prov. xxviii. 13.

**O**F all the Obstacles to the Increase of the true Religion, a wicked Life was always the most pernicious; for whatever may be the Pretence of those who forsake her Communion, when their Case is stated without Partiality, it will appear, that the Love of Liberty, and indulging corrupt Nature, was the chief Motive of their Defection. For those some of the Errors which they propagated were the Effect of Pride, and seemed to have no immediate Relation to Practice; yet the generality of their Tenets were destructive to good Morality; and even those that were merely speculative, originally laid the Foundation of a wicked Behaviour. If they withdrew themselves from the Authority of the Church, it was a Breach of Obedience, and opened a Gap for all sorts of Disorders. If they denied the Power of God's efficacious Grace and Free-will, and declared them to be inconsistent, what was the Consequence, but to take away the Necessity of Prayer and other Methods of Salvation? If they exploded the Merit of good Works, it plainly discovered their Indifference as to the performing them. If they declaimed against Fasting, and other corporal Mortifications, and ridiculed the Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, 'tis a plain Indication they were disposed to indulge corrupt Nature, and Excesses of all kinds. But among all their pretended Reforms, the most remarkable Proof of a wicked Disposition, was laying aside the Practice of Confession, which was the

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the Method established by our Saviour *Christ*, for the Conversion of Sinners.

In order therefore to inform you how to comply with it, as being the second Part of Penance, I will lay before you in this Discourse, *First*, The Necessity and Benefit of Confession; and, *2dly*, The Preparations and Method of it; and, *Lastly*, The Conditions which must accompany it.

To be rightly informed of the Necessity, or Obligation there is of confessing your Sins, according as it is practised in the Catholick Church, you are to distinguish three sorts of Confession. *1st*, Confession to God alone. *2dly*, Confessing to a Friend, by way of Advising. And, *3dly*, Confessing to the Ministers of God's Church, according to the Method prescribed by the Gospel.

That there is an Obligation of confessing our Sins to Almighty God, is manifest from the Nature of Repentance; because true Sorrow and Forgiveness require Acknowledgement. Confessing to a Friend, by way of Advice, tho' it falls under no Precept, is a way of being relieved, and of avoiding Evil, both spiritual and temporal. Upon this Foundation our Saviour *Christ* was pleased to erect a spiritual Tribunal, purposely for hearing the Sinner's Case, where by confessing his Faults, he might appease the injured Majesty of God, and receive proper Instructions to move him to Sorrow, comfort him in his Troubles, and secure him against future Temptations. This Practice of Confession was appointed under a Precept to the *Jews*, as we read in the 5th Chapter of *Numbers* (Vers. 6. 7.) It was also prefigured in the old Law, especially in the Ceremony performed when any one was infected with the Distemper called the Leprosy, which was a Type of Sin. The Persons so infected, were obliged to present themselves to the Priests, who had Authority to separate them from the rest of the People, and readmit them as soon as they were cured (*Levit. xiii. 14. Math.*

Matth. viii. 4.) Now, dear Christians, this Ceremony is constantly applied by the antient Fathers to what was practised amongst Christians, when they appeared in the Church to do Penance for their Sins. A nearer Figure of this Practice is observable in St. *John Baptist*, who preparing the Way for our Redeemer, the People flocked to him, confessing their Sins, hereby intimating the Tribunal of Confession, which was soon after to be established by *Christ* and his Apostles. And accordingly that Custom is made mention of in the *Acts* of the Apostles (*Acts* xv. 18.) *And many of them that came confessing and declaring their Sins.* No doubt those Persons did not fail to confess their Sins to God; but besides that general Confession, the Words of the Scripture import a particular Declaration of their Offences to the Apostles. And this not only by way of Advice, but by way of Precept, as it is distinctly signified in the Words of St. *James* (*Jam.* v. 16.) *Confess your Sins one to another*; that is, not every Body to every one, but the Flock to the Priests of the Church, who have Power and *Jurisdiction* conferred upon them, to loose or bind according as they shall find Persons disposed.

Now, that such a Power is given to the Ministers of the Church, and that a Confession of Sin is implied in the Execution of this Power, is so plainly delivered in the holy Scriptures, that the Words cannot possibly be understood in any other Sense. (*John* x. 23.) *He breathed upon them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose Sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose Sins you shall retain, they are retained.* For how shall the Ministers of the Church know what is to be forgiven, and what retained, unless the Sinner make the true State of their Conscience known to them by Confession? How shall they know what Remedy is proper to be applied, unless they are first acquainted with the Nature of the Distemper? The Case is parallel in temporal

Tribunals;



Tribunals? A Judge has no Light how to pass Sentence, either in civil or criminal Causes, unless Facts are made appear by proper Evidence. The same Method is required in the Tribunal of Confession; nor can the Ministers of the Church execute their Power, unless the Offender make a distinct Declaration of his Sins.

Besides, the Sacrament of Penance was also ordained by our Saviour *Christ*, as a certain Cure (if you make right Use of it) to heal the Wounds of your Souls, of which, consequently, the Priests are the spiritual Physicians. How then can they know what Remedies to apply, how can they give good and suitable Advice, unless you give them a full Account of your Condition? Thus, you see, whether you consider the Ministers of God as the Judges, or as the Physicians of your Souls, you must, upon both Accounts, make a sincere and exact Confession of all your Sins and Offences.

From these Proofs it may be inferred, that Confession is not a *human*, but a *divine* Institution: And indeed the Nature of the Thing declares it to be such; for the Aversion Persons naturally have to it is so great, that had it been invented or imposed only by Men, the World would never have so universally submitted to the Practice. These Considerations have prevailed with many, who are otherwise our Adversaries, to wish that the pretended first Reformers had still kept up the Discipline. But it was too great a Restraint upon those who aimed chiefly at Liberty and Pleasure. Indeed they make a Shew of it in their Common Prayer Book, where all that are troubled in Mind, are advised to confess their Sins, and to apply themselves to the Ministry for Absolution. But it is an Advice they scarce ever follow, tho' they cannot but be sensible of the many Benefits they are deprived of by that Neglect.

For as all divine Precepts are founded in Reason, and recommend themselves by their Usefulness to  
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the Practice of Virtue, and reclaiming Sinners; so nothing can be alledged more in Favour of Confession, than to consider it, *first*, as a Means of putting us in the Grace and Favour of God: For his Goodness shines no where more bountifully than in this Sacrament of Reconciliation. What should we have done, had we not been blessed with this Expedient of Mercy? I fear there are but few here present who can say, they have faithfully preserved their baptismal Innocence: I fear you cannot say, you have never forfeited your Right to the Kingdom of Heaven, by a mortal Sin. You see therefore, what a Blessing Confession is; why then do you slight it? Is it an Unhappiness to be delivered from the Precipice of a miserable Damnation? Is it an Unhappiness to be restored to the Favour of an offended Majesty? Is it an Unhappiness to be admitted into the Fellowship of the Saints in Heaven? You have dealt unjustly with your God, and can it be too much to make him Satisfaction by so small a Humiliation? Besides, let not the Devil tempt you to think it too much Trouble, since you ought not to spare the most difficult Labours to save your Souls; let not the Business of this World be your Hindrance; the Affairs of your Souls are your main Concern. Let not Fear or Shame seduce you: Where is the Shame in seeking a Reconciliation with your offended God? If there be any Shame, it ought to be in sinning, and not in asking Pardon. 'Tis better to expose yourselves to one private Person, tied by all Laws, human and divine, to a perpetual Secrecy, than be exposed one Day before the whole World, to your eternal Confusion.

Now to consider, *2dly*, That Confession is a Means which contributes much to the Practice of Virtue, and reclaiming of Sinners. The Thing itself speaks as much, but Experience is still a more convincing Proof; by the great Number of Conversions which daily happen, and are entirely owing to that salutary Practice.

Practice. Those who have been involved in most enormous Crimes, have found Relief, and an End put to all their Disorders, by a sincere Confession of their Sins. It has humbled the Proud, turned the Hearts of the Envious, bridled Ambition, extinguished Lust and Concupiscence, amended human Frailties, removed the Occasions of offending, and in a Word, produced all those good Effects for which every Christian ought to labour. You need no other Confirmation of these Particulars, than to attend to the Lives of so many Saints, who have made Confession the Basis of their shining Merits, and the first Step towards their Conversion. In this they followed the Method which all wise and serious Persons pursue. In Things of the greatest Moment, when they are involved in an intricate Affair, they advise with a Friend of Probity and Experience. In Diseases you are willing to have the Assistance of a skilful Physician; in Law-suits, you apply yourselves to some eminent Counsellor. And if this is a prudent and beneficial Method in temporal Concerns, why should it not be equally serviceable in Affairs of Conscience, where the Adviser can have no Interest, nor lie under any Temptation, to say or act any Thing, but what manifestly tends to the Good of the Person in Distress?

It happens, dear Christians, in Confession, as it does in all other Duties, there is a beneficial Way of complying with them, and a Way of performing them without any Profit. And particularly as to Confession, certain Rules and Preparations are required to render it truly serviceable. Tho' you are fully convinced of the Obligation, and sensible of the Benefit and Blessings that attend the Performance, yet some other Things are to be considered, to render the Duty compleat.

When you begin to prepare yourselves for Confession, you ought first of all, to beg Light and Grace of Almighty God, to know and remember  
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your Sins; for we are apt to judge partially of ourselves; Self-love, and our other Passions, many Times blind us, and make us over-look several Faults in ourselves, which, perhaps, we can easily enough see in other Persons. But let me tell you, you can never escape the Knowledge of God, who perfectly sees and comprehends every Thought of your Mind, and Motion of your Heart. This made *St. Paul* say (1 Cor. iv. 4.) that tho' he was not conscious to himself of any Guilt that lay upon his Conscience, yet he durst not, for all that, pronounce himself justified; because, says he, it is God that must judge me. Whensoever therefore you go about to prepare yourselves for Confession, be sure never omit, by some short Prayer at least, to beg of Almighty God, that by the Assistance of his holy Grace, you may be able to discover your Sins, and make a true and worthy Confession.

After this, you must endeavour to find out your Sins by a careful and diligent Examen of your Conscience. All that Almighty God requires of you in this Point, is, that you use the like Care and Diligence in this Examen, as you would in any other Matter of great Concern and Importance. Learn from the Sollicitude Men have about their temporal Concerns, the Care you ought to have of the Affairs of your Salvation. If a Man, for Example, was to be tried for his Life, and knew not well what Accusations would be laid to his Charge, he would not fail to examine well, in what he had transgressed the Laws, and made himself liable to Punishment; and if after this, a hearty Sorrow, a sincere Acknowledgement of his Faults, would acquit him, he would not omit to make a diligent Examination of his Life, and an exact Confession of the Transgressions he had committed.

There are two Examens which may serve to prepare you for a good Confession. The first is, a daily Examen; which every one, who is careful of his  
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Salvation, ought to make every Night of the Actions and failings of that Day; this Examen is of very great Advantage; and whosoever neglects it, I fear he is but in a dangerous Way as to his Salvation. You must be sure to join to this Examen a hearty Act of Contrition; that is, a sincere Sorrow and firm Purpose of avoiding those Sins in which you find yourselves involved. This daily Examen, if you make it well, will bring you to a true Knowledge of yourselves; nothing can contribute more to a Reformation of your Lives, and to make you remember the Sins you have to confess, when you come to the Sacrament of Penance. Whereas if a Person frequently omits his daily Examen, if he leads a careless, and perhaps a sinful Life, especially if he be engaged in the Custom and Habit of Sin, and yet neglect to call himself often to Account, he is in a very great Danger of forgetting what he ought to remember, and, by this Means, of making an imperfect and defective Confession. 'Tis true, Almighty God requires no more, than that you accuse yourselves of all the Sins, which, after a careful and diligent Examen, you are able to remember; and what you cannot call to Mind, in case you are otherwise rightly disposed, are certainly forgiven in the same Manner as if they were confessed; but it is a different Case when this Forgetfulness is occasioned by your past Neglect; when the Reason why you forgot your Sins, the Number and Circumstances of them, is, because you would not take Care to remember them.

To repair this Fault, and supply as much as possible the Omission of a daily Examen, such Persons must take a longer Time, and more Pains in that second and general Examen, which every one is obliged to make when he comes to the Sacrament of Penance. Doubtless, such careless Sinners, as come seldom to Confession, who have fallen into a Multitude of Sins, and perhaps grievous ones too, must  
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not content themselves with a short, negligent, and superficial Examen, before they come to Confession; a longer and more diligent Preparation, both as to their Examen and Contrition, is absolutely necessary for them, not to make themselves guilty of a Sacrilege, instead of receiving any Benefit by the Sacrament.

And now, as to the Manner of this general Examen, give me Leave, for the Instruction of every one, and especially those who cannot read, and consequently are not acquainted with the Table of Sins, and those Helps which Prayer-books may afford, to enumerate those Sins which are forbidden by the Law of God. You must know, that every Sin is a Breach of some Commandment or Precept of God or his Church: And together with the Commandments, you must likewise include what we call the seven deadly Sins.

By the first Commandment you are bound to honour and adore Almighty God; to believe in him, hope in him, and love him. Be sure therefore examine yourselves, and see whether your Affections have been chiefly placed on God, or rather upon yourselves and upon Creatures? Whether you have been careful in your daily Prayers and Devotions, or perhaps many Times miss'd, and it may be, some Days said very few, or no Prayers at all? Whether you have firmly believed all Matters of Faith, as God has revealed, and his Church proposes them, or whether you have perhaps doubted of any thing which your holy Faith teaches you? Whether you have spoke irreverently of God and his Saints, or of Religion, and what belongs to the Service of God? Whether you have given way to any Thoughts of Despair, or what is more common, presumed on the Goodness of God, and out of such a Presumption, given way to your Passions, and deferred your Repentance? Whether you have made Use of any Super-

Superstition, believed Dreams, consulted and given Credit to Fortune-tellers, or the like?

The second Commandment forbids to take the Name of God in vain. You must then examine yourselves, whether you do not name the sacred Name of God irreverently, and on slight Occasions? Whether you have not sworn rashly by his holy Name, by your Faith, Conscience, or Soul, or used any other Oaths? Whether what you swore to in this Manner was not false, which makes it still a much greater Sin; or whether you swore to do what you did not then intend to do, or what you ought not to do? Whether you have not cursed your Neighbour, or at least the Creatures of God, as your Cattle and the like, either rashly or in Anger, or Passion? Whether you have not provoked others to Anger, so as to make them swear or curse? Whether you have not broke some Vow or Promise which you had made to Almighty God?

By the third Commandment, you are bound to keep holy the *Sunday*, and other Days commanded by the Church. You must then examine yourselves how you have spent those Days? Whether you have abstained from all servile Work which was not of absolute Necessity? Whether you have spent a good Part of those Days in your Devotions, and in the Service of God, or perhaps the greatest Part of them in Idleness, Drinking, Gaming, and the like? Whether you have neglected to hear Mass on those Days when you could do it, or at least have not come too late, and so not satisfy the Obligation of the Day?

As to the fourth Commandment, which, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; Parents are here to examine themselves, whether they have taken Care of their Children, and their Education, and particularly to see that they are instructed in the Christian Doctrine? Whether they have not given them bad Example by their Swearing and Cursing, by immodest Discourse, by their Excess in drink-  
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ing? The like may be said of Masters and Mistresses in regard of their Servants. Children are to examine themselves, whether they have not been undutiful and disobedient to their Parents, and other lawful Superiors? Whether they have not spoke contemptibly of them, or to them, scorned their Advice, taken pleasure to vex them, and the like? Servants must here examine themselves how they have behaved towards their Masters.

By the fifth Commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*, is not only forbidden Murder, but also quarrelling and disagreeing with your Neighbours; as also Anger and Passion, all Hatred and Ill-will against one another, all resenting, and not forgiving Injuries.

As to the sixth and ninth Commandments, every one must examine himself, whether he has not been guilty of Sins of Unchastity, either in Thought; Word, or Action? Whether he has not willingly given Ear to immodest Discourse or Songs? Whether he has not, some Way or other, been the Cause of another's sinning, in some Kind or other, against Chastity or Modesty?

The seventh and Tenth Commandments forbid every one to wrong any Person, either by Action or Desire. You must examine yourselves, whether you have not injured or cheated others, either by Bargain, or Gaming, by not paying just Debts, or by running into Debts, which are not likely to be paid? Whether you have made full Restitution for the Damages and Injuries which you have done to your Neighbour? Whether you have been so charitable to the Poor, and those in Necessity, as you might and ought to have been?

As to the eighth Commandment, which forbids all false Witness against our Neighbour, every one must examine himself, whether he has not been guilty of detracting and speaking ill of others? Whether he has spread false and doubtful Reports to their Prejudice? Whether he has judged rashly  
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of them in any Kind? Whether he has not been willing to hear others detract and speak ill of them? Whether in fine, he has not offended Almighty God, by any Lies or Untruths?

Every one must likewise examine himself, whether he has not given way to Pride or Vanity, by thinking too well of himself, and preferring himself before others; by seeking to be esteemed, and by dispraising others? Whether he has not envied and grieved at the Prosperity and good Fortune of others; perhaps rejoiced at their Losses and ill Fortune? Whether he has not offended God by Sins of Intemperance, by Excess in drinking, and the like? Whether he has kept and observed the Fasts commanded by the Church, and the Days of Abstinence, in such a Manner as he ought? Whether, in fine, he has not been slothful and negligent in the Service of God, in frequenting the Sacraments, and in the Exercises of other good Works, according to the Opportunity he had? These, dear Christians, are the chief Points in which Sinners must examine themselves, in order to make a good Confession.

Let us now consider the Conditions which must accompany Confession, and in what Manner you must accuse and declare your Sins.

After a diligent Examination of your Consciences, and a hearty Sorrow and firm Purpose of Amendment, you must accuse yourselves to your spiritual Father and confess all the Sins you remember. Here you must observe, that your Confession must be accompanied with this Condition, *viz.* it must be *entire*. The want of this Condition renders the Sacrament null, and the Confession sacrilegious. Besides this Condition (in order to make your Confession perfect) there are five others, *viz.* it should be with *Sorrow, clear, short, frequent, and humble*.

*First* then, your Confession must be *entire*; that is, of all the Sins you remember, after a diligent

and sufficient Examen. But here you must make a Distinction between the Confession of mortal and venial Sins; the Confession of one being of Precept, the other only recommended as good and profitable to such as have a Desire to amend their lesser Failings and Imperfections, and make Advancement in the Way of Virtue. 'Tis therefore in regard of the Confession of mortal Sins, that this Integrity is required, so that, in order that your Confession may be *entire*, you must take great Care not to omit any considerable Sin, which you have had the Misfortune to fall into since the last Time you confessed. And you must take Notice, that every one is strictly and indispenibly obliged, not only to confess the different Kinds of Sins which he has committed, but also the Number of all his deadly and grievous Sins, as well as he can remember, whether in Deeds, in Words, in Thoughts and Desires; so that it will not suffice to accuse yourselves, as a great many do, by saying, I have curs'd, I have sworn, I have neglected my Prayers, I have neglected hearing Mass, I have stolen, I have had immodest Thoughts, I have lied, I have detracted others, and the like; such an Accusation as this will not do; for you cannot but see that there is a great deal of Difference between committing a Sin only once, and doing it ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred Times, and every Time it is repeated, it is a new Sin. But this, you'll say, seems a very difficult Task to some, and looks like an Impossibility to others; but let me tell you, you are very much deceived, for you are only obliged to give the Number as near as you can tell; and if it be in regard of Sins of Habit, into which you have so frequently fallen, that you cannot give any set Number, you need only tell the Length of Time you have been engaged in such Habits, and how often, probably speaking, you might have fallen into such Sins in a Day, or a Week,

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Week, and so on. So that, you see, it will not suffice for a Person to accuse himself and say I have been drunk, &c. all this signifies nothing; so that you must tell the Number, that is, how often you have committed such and such Sins.

Again: You must not only confess the Number of your Sins, but you must also declare the Circumstances, which either change the Nature of the Sin, or considerably increase the Guilt. Thus, for Example, it is not enough for a Person to accuse himself, by saying, I have stolen, or taken what was not my own, but he must also express the Value of what he took; and if he took it out of a Church, or some other holy Place, that Circumstance, which makes it a Sacrilege, must be express'd in Confession. This Condition of making an *entire* Confession is absolutely necessary, as I said before; for if any Person wilfully leaves out any one mortal Sin, either out of Fear or Shame, or upon any other Account whatsoever, the Confession which he makes is void, and of no Value, because none of his Sins can be forgiven, unless they are all forgiven; and therefore he returns more guilty from Confession than before.

*Secondly*, Your Confession must be with *Sorrow*: that is, with a Sentiment of Grief and Regret for the Sins you accuse yourselves of, resolving never more to fall into the like Faults.

*Thirdly*, Your Confession ought to be *clear*; that is, in Terms as easy and intelligible as possibly you can, since you ought to have a sincere Will to make yourselves understood by your Confessor; and therefore no Words or Expressions must be made use of, which may cloak or disguise your Sins; for if you should do this with a Design that your Confessor should not understand the State of your Conscience, it would be the same as if you had concealed your Sins.

*Fourthly,* Your Confession ought to be *short*; that is, not to say any more than what is necessary to make yourselves rightly understood, and to avoid repeating the same Thing, or running into needless Circumstances, which are but too frequent among Penitents. You must therefore simply tell your Sins in this Manner, *viz.* I accuse myself, that since my last Confession I have committed such a Sin so often; so adding only what is necessary to make your Confessor understand the Quality of your Sins, or answering directly to the Questions he shall ask, to inform himself the better.

*Fifthly,* Your Confession ought to be *frequent*; for tho' it is true there is a Precept of the Church which obliges every one to confess once a Year; yet this Precept is rather to declare, that a Person deserves not the Name of a Catholick, but rather to be excommunicated, and separated from the Communion of the Faithful, who does not at least confess and communicate once a Year: You are not therefore to imagine, that a Person complies with his Obligation to Almighty God, who comes so seldom to the Sacraments. If you sin often you ought to confess often: And whosoever has a true Care of the great Concern of his eternal Salvation, comes to the Sacraments, makes his Accompts straight with Almighty God at least once a Month or thereabouts.

*Lastly,* Your Confession ought to be accompanied with *Humility*: Almighty God, says St. James, *resists the Proud and gives Grace to the Humble.* If all your Actions ought to be done with the Spirit of Humility, how much more this of Penance and Confession, when you come to present yourselves as Criminals before Almighty God, to accuse yourselves, and beg Pardon for your Offences? Your Confession must be humble, like that of the Publican, who thought himself not worthy to lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but with an humble and contrite Heart

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cried out, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner.* You must therefore enter into the like Dispositions of Humility, whensoever you confess your Sins, and hope to obtain Pardon.

Thus, dear Christians, I have shewed you the Necessity and Benefit of confessing your Sins, in order to obtain Pardon; I have likewise shewed you with what Care you ought to examine and prepare yourselves; and I have proposed to you the Conditions, which must and ought to accompany every Confession.

In the mean Time I have said nothing of a general Confession, because it is not necessary for every one; I mean, for those who have been careful and exact in every particular Confession. 'Tis notwithstanding very necessary for all those who have any reasonable Doubt of a want of a true and hearty Contrition, or to supply the Defect of a sufficient Examen. For if any one has had the Misfortune to leave out any considerable Sin, at any Time when he came to the Sacrament of Penance; if, after great Sins, he has been very negligent in examining and preparing himself, when he came to Confession; if, in fine, his Confessions have been generally without any Amendment or Change of Life; 'tis then absolutely necessary for all such Persons, to use the best Preparation they can, and by a general Confession to endeavour to make their Peace with God; such a Peace, such a Reconciliation, such a Conversion, as may secure their Salvation for Eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven.

## DISC. IV.

*On a sacrilegious CONFESSION.*

*Be not ashamed to speak Truth for thy Soul: for there is a Confusion that causeth Death, and there is a Confusion that bringeth Grace and Glory. Eccl. iv. 24.*

**T**HE Confusion, dear Christians, that *causeth Death*, is that which hinders the Sinner from laying open the true State of his Conscience; without which, his Soul can never be restored to the Life of Grace. But the Confusion, which has *Grace* in this Life, and eternal *Glory* in the next for its Reward, is that, which a Penitent submits to, in becoming his own Accuser. Whence it appears, that to conceal willingly in Confession, any mortal Sin, or what you judge or believe to be a great Sin, is not only the Addition of a most grievous Fault, but is also the greatest Folly and Madness; as I shall endeavour to shew you in this Discourse, by explaining to you the Nature of this Sin.

To conceal a Sin in Confession, is a Crime of that Nature, that we cannot doubt but the Devil himself is the great Promoter of it: he has a double Aim in tempting Men to it: *First*, to gratify his own Pride and Malice, to which nothing is more insupportable, than the humble Confession of repenting Sinners: And, *2dly*, To perpetuate the Slavery of those whom he has already in his Power; well knowing, that if he can but get them into his Snare, he is secure of them. You may therefore be well assured, that whenever the Shame of confessing any Sin begins to gain Ground so far upon you, as to put you upon deliberating, whether you shall or shall not do your Duty, 'tis the Devil suggests these dangerous Thoughts; 'tis the mortal Enemy of your Souls endeavours to tie up your  
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Tongues, that the Gate of Mercy may be for ever shut against you; 'tis the Father of Lies, makes you ashamed, of what alone can procure a solid Glory. ' The Devil, says St. *Chrysostom* (Hom. de ' Confess.) inverts the Order established by God; ' which is, that we should be ashamed to sin, and ' and glory in confessing our Sin. The Devil inverts ' this Order, and gives us a Confidence to sin, and a ' Shame to confess.' Whilst he tempts Men to sin, 'tis his Business to make them throw off all Shame; this being one of the greatest Restraints Almighty God has laid upon human Nature. But when the Sin is accomplished, and the Party concerned begins to look back, with a heavy Heart, upon the Offence he has committed, then the Devil returns upon him with new Snares, and instead of robbing him of Shame, as before, he heighens it as much as he can; instead of hiding from him the Deformity of his Sin, he sets it in the broadest Light before him, and represents it under the most frightful Aggravations; not to raise in his Heart a penitential Abhorrence of it, but to overwhelm him with such an excessive Confusion for what he has done, that the Difficulty of confessing becoming insupportable, it may engage him in a desperate Resolution, of either utterly abandoning the Sacrament of Penance, the only Sanctuary left to secure his Return to God; or, what is worse, to play the Hypocrite, and impose upon his Confessor.

This is the Devil's ordinary Stratagem, which has ever brought him in such a plentiful Harvest of Souls, that it is no Wonder he should still continue to practise the same Cheat upon us. But the great Wonder is, that Christians, who have the Light both of Faith and Reason to guide them, should be so easily drawn into the Snare, and induced to commit a Sin attended with so many Aggravations; that we may properly call it, a Complication of many Crimes, wrapt up in one single Act.

For, *first*, The Party concerned is guilty of Sacrilege, and that of the first Magnitude; since it is the Abuse of a Sacrament instituted by *Christ*, to restore Grace to the Soul, and in particular, to reconcile us to Almighty God. Now, in making a false Confession, you provoke God by those very Means he has appointed to appease him: You make him your Enemy, at the same Time you go to make your Peace with him; and you change the Sacrament, which is a Sentence of Absolution, into a Sentence of Condemnation. But what is still more, this Sacrilege is the Forerunner of another of a much blacker Dye, *viz.* A sacrilegious Communion, which generally follows of Course.

*2dly*, He is guilty of *Hypocrisy*, in making use of a solemn Act of Religion to cover a Sin; in masking a diabolical Pride with a counterfeit Humility; in affecting to be most religiously devout, when he is most sacrilegiously wicked; and finally, in pretending a Repentance for his Sins past, when he is both actually increasing his former Guilt, and designing soon after to add to it another most grievous Sin.

*3dly*, He is guilty of *Ingratitude*, in despising the greatest Pledges of God's Goodness towards him, and frustrating as far as in him lies, the Designs of his Mercy; nay, using his Blessings as Arms to fight against him. However, these are but the inseparable Circumstances of this Sin; but its proper Malice consists in being a wilful and premeditated *Lying to the Holy Ghost*: For the better understanding whereof, it is to be observed, that when a Priest officiates in the sacred Tribunal of Penance, he acts there as God's Representative, and publick Minister of *Jesus Christ*: Now, whatever Affront is offered to a publick Minister, especially when he acts as such, reflects upon him whose Minister he is. So that the Behaviour of a Person, presenting himself before the Minister of *Christ*, is to be considered no otherwis  
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than as if *Christ* himself were visibly present to him : And by Consequence, all Dissimulation and Double-dealing, used with a Confessor during the actual Administration of his sacred Function, is endeavouring to impose upon God himself ; and lying to the one, is the same as lying to the other.

Now to proceed in shewing the Nature of this Sin : Let us first consider how hateful all sorts of Lying is to God. *There are six Things*, says *Solomon*, (Prov. vi. 16.) *which God hates* ; and the second of these is a *lying Tongue*. Again, in his 12th Chapter, he tells us, that *lying Lips are an Abomination to the Lord* ; and the Reason is, because *Lying* is directly opposite to one of God's Attributes, viz. *Truth* ; and since he cannot but love his own divine Perfections, it follows, that he cannot but hate whatever is directly opposite to any of them.

But to be more convinced of the Hatred God bears to Lying, you need but consider how odious a Quality it is counted even amongst Men, whose Reason, tho' much obscured by original and actual Sins, yet amidst this Darkness, every one has still Light enough to discern, in some Measure, the Beauty and Loveliness of Truth, and that all Men in the World naturally hate a lying Tongue ; for Proof whereof, I need but offer this familiar Instance, That no Man, tender of his Credit, can bear the Imputation of it ; and that one of the greatest Affronts that can be put upon a Man of Honour, is to give him the Lye.

Hence it appears, that Lying is not only universally detested, but that the Opinion Men have of its Deformity proceeds from an inbred Principle of Nature, and is so deeply rooted, that nothing can efface it : And what wonder then is it, that lying Lips (as *Solomon* tells us) should be an Abomination to God ? For if Men, corrupted as they are with Sin, and blinded with Passion, are so enamoured with the admirable Beauty of Truth, that they cannot

but regard a lying Tongue as a Thing worthy of Hatred and Averſion; how much more odious and hateful then muſt this Vice be to the pure Eye of God, who fully comprehending the infinite Excellence of his own divine Perfections, whereof Truth is one, has alſo a clear and comprehensive Knowledge of the Deformity of Falsehood, Lying, and Diſſimulation, which are the Vices oppoſite to this charming Virtue? He muſt certainly hate the one, as much as he loves the other.

However there are ſeveral Degrees in the Sin of Lying, ſome of which are of a worſe Complexion than others; as for Inſtance, to be caſually ſurprized into a trivial or officious Lye, is by all judged a venial Sin: But to make a Practice, even of ſuch Lyes, or to ſtand out ſtiſly in a deliberate and ſtudied Lye (tho' it be no Prejudice to any one) cannot but be very diſpleaſing to God, becauſe it betrays a ſtrong Affection to it; and a wilful Affection to any Sin whatever, is a very bad and dangerous Diſpoſition.

Now I leave you to judge, what ſort of Sin it muſt be to lye to a Confefſor. For if all Sorts of Lying, but eſpecially premeditated and ſtudied Lying, be very hateful to God; if to diſſemble and play the Hypocrite with a Parent or Superior, or any other Perſon, to whom we owe and profeſs nothing but Sincerity and Candour, be yet a fouler Sort of Lying, than when 'tis only practiſed towards an indifferent Perſon; how hateful a Thing muſt it be, to come with a premeditated and deliberate Lye to a Miniſter of *Chriſt*! who beſides being a ſpiritual Father, and one to whom we make Profeſſion of the greateſt Confidence, in ſeeming to truſt him with the very Secrets of our Hearts, is, over and above, by Virtue of his Function, the Representative of *Jeſus Chriſt*; how deteſtable, I ſay, is it to juggle and diſſemble with a Perſon of this Character! ſince  
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lying to such a one, is not lying to Man, but to God himself, as I have already told you.

And can you think of such a Sin without Horror? is it not a Crime that justly deserves to be detested with the greatest Hatred and Aversion? If *Christ* should manifest himself visibly to you, durst you have Boldness to dissemble with him, or attempt to pass a Lye upon him? And is it not the same Affront, whether he be present to you in Person, or in the Person of his Minister? For to lye to God's Minister, is to lye to God himself: As it is declared by *St. John* upon a certain Occasion; wherein God thought fit to manifest his Hatred to this Sin, by so severe and exemplary a Judgment, as struck the whole Church with Terror and Amazement.

I suppose you all guess I mean the dreadful End of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, who having sold an Estate, pretended, as other Christians had done, to bring the whole Price of it to *St. Peter*; whereas in Effect, they had kept back some Part of it for their own private Use. But *St. Peter* knowing, by divine Revelation, the Cheat they came to put upon him, was deeply wounded at Heart, and being moved with a just Indignation, spoke thus to *Ananias*, (*Acts v. 4.*) *Why has Satan tempted thy Heart to lye unto the Holy Ghost? for thou hast not lied unto Man but unto God.* Whereupon the unfortunate Wretch, as one Thunder-struck, fell down dead at *St. Peter's* Feet; and and a few Moments after, his Wife, who had been an Accomplise with him in his Crime, received the same Reward of her Hypocrisy.

This, dear Christians, is the Account given us by *St. Luke*, of the exemplary Judgment that befel this unhappy Couple. And 'tis to be particularly observed, that *St. Peter* stiles their Sin, a *lying to the Holy Ghost*; For tho' he knew the Cheat was immediately intended, and practised upon himself, yet, in as much as he was *Christ's* Minister, he con-

sidered the Injury as done to God himself, and the Punishment was proportioned accordingly. However you may observe, that in the Case of these two Persons so severely punished, there was neither *Sacrilege*, nor *Injustice*, but the whole Charge against them was *Lying* and *Hypocrisy*. Whereas, in the Case of a false Confession, besides foul Dealing, Diffimulation, Hypocrisy, and Lying to the Holy Ghost, there is, over and above, a Sacrament profaned, God's Blessing abused, his Mercies trampled upon, and the most effectual Means of Amendment turned into an Occasion of greater Sins. So that it plainly appears, that the Crime of a counterfeit Penitent is far more grievous in itself, and by Consequence more detestable in the Sight of God, than the Sin of *Ananias* and *Saphira*.

But will he then let the wicked Sinner, who is guilty of false Confessions, go unpunished? No, dear Christians, no: For tho' the Criminal suffers no present Punishment in the Body, yet his Soul falls under the Malediction of God, in the very Instant he commits the Fact. So that whilst his deluded Confessor, acting to the best of his Knowledge, is busy in pronouncing his Absolution; Almighty God, who cannot be imposed upon, looks down upon him with Indignation, and instead of cancelling the Hand-writing that was against him, dooms his Soul to an Increase of Torments, answerable to the Increase of Guilt.

It is true, the Time of Life being a Time of Mercy, the Sentence pronounced against him may be reversed, provided he renders himself worthy of it by a hearty Sorrow, and sincere Confession. And then he ought daily to acknowledge God's infinite Goodness, in giving him Time and Grace to repent, which he has refused to those who were guilty of less grievous Sins. This very Consideration alone will furnish you with Motives enough to raise in your  
Souls



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Souls the greatest Detestation and Abhorrence of this Sin of a false Confession.

However, I will now proceed to shew you, that the Concealment of any Sin in Confession, is not only the Addition of a most grievous Sin, as I have already proved, but is over and above the very highest Strain of Folly and Madness.

If by imposing upon your Confessor, you could at the same Time deceive Almighty God; if by concealing your Sins from the Knowledge of Man, you could also hide them from the all-seeing Eyes of *Jesus Christ*; finally, if your avoiding a Momentary Confusion in this Life, were a Means to shelter you against eternal Confusion hereafter, then indeed you would not altogether want Encouragement to play the Hypocrite, and deal unfairly with God's Minister: And tho' in so doing you might be taxed with Irreligion and Sacrilege, you could not, however, be accused of Weakness, and Folly.

But alas! the Case is quite otherwise; the Ulcers of your Soul, though never so industriously conceal'd from the Eyes of Men, lie always open to the Eyes of God: That every Sin which you seek to hide from your Confessor, is already registered in the great Book of Accounts; and nothing but an humble Confession of it can hinder it from appearing against you to your everlasting Confusion, both as to the Hour of Death, and the great Day of Judgment: And is it not then an unaccountable Folly, to refuse a Compliance with a Duty, when there is no Prospect of Advantage to encourage you to transgress against it, and your submitting to it is the only Means to rescue you from everlasting Evils?

Suppose a Criminal, condemned to die, should have his Pardon offered him by the King, on Condition that he would discover his Crime in secret, to a Judge appointed by him; would not he be thought

to have lost his Reason, if he should refuse to submit to such easy Terms? All Men would certainly pronounce him guilty of excessive Madness and Cruelty to himself: Yet this is the Case of those who conceal any Thing in Confession; for Almighty God imposes no harder Condition on Sinners, and engages his Word to deliver those who submit sincerely to it from eternal Death, and the endless Miseries their Sins have deserved. What Madness then, and Infatuation is it, to reject so great a Mercy, and purchase their Pardon at so cheap a Rate!

You will tell me, perhaps, the Conditions required, are not so easy as is pretended; since to declare one's secret Sins, is a Thing to which Man's Nature has the greatest Repugnance. But now, to silence these Reasonings of human Pride, only suppose that the ordinary Punishment of every Sin you commit, were to have it exposed, as long as you live, to the View of every one you converse with; and then I ask you in this Case, whether a Sinner would not be very mercifully dealt with, if to deliver himself from this publick and lasting Confusion, he were only obliged to confess his Sins, in private, to a single Person? And whether his refusing to accept the Condition, would not draw on him the Imputation of Folly and Madness? The Case, dear Christians, admits of no Dispute; since common Prudence directs every one to choose the lesser of two Evils.

This then being supposed, will answer all Difficulties pretended on the Score of natural Repugnance in confessing your Sins: For let there be the greatest Repugnance in Nature to it, if submitting be the only Means a Sinner has left him, to prevent Evils infinitely greater than what he pretends to avoid, his refusing to comply with the Condition, cannot be excused from the most extravagant Weakness and Folly. It remains only to shew, that the Shame and Confusion which will fall upon an impenitent Sinner

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Sinner in the Life to come, will not only be infinitely greater than what he apprehends in confessing his Sins, but will, in every Respect, exceed any Confusion possible in this World.

To make this clear, you need only compare the one with the other. And first, as to their Duration, 'tis plain, that the longest Confusion you can suffer in this Life, cannot last longer than Life itself; Death will infallibly put a Period to it; but the Confusion in the Life to come will last for ever.

Alas! you are here afraid of a little Confusion before a single Man, and you reflect not that you must be exposed before a numberless Multitude of Men and Angels, before whom all the Sins of your whole Life will be laid open, which will throw so heavy a Load of Shame upon you, that you will even wish to sink into the Ground, and hide yourselves in the darkest Dungeons of Hell, to avoid being seen; but your Shame will pursue you even thither, and be as everlasting as those Flames that will never be quenched. Whence I leave you to judge, whether Almighty God deals not very mercifully with you, in putting it into your Power to change this terrible and everlasting Confusion, due to your Sins, for a momentary Humiliation before one single Person, who, as you all know, is under the strictest Obligation of an inviolable Secrecy, that human and divine Laws can lay upon him; and whether your refusing to submit to such easy Terms of Reconciliation, be not a Weakness and Folly, rather to be expected from a Man out of his Senses than one that pretends to Judgment and Reason?

However, to convince you still more fully of this Truth, I shall make it appear, that confessing your Sins is commendable, even for the present Ease it gives, and that the Confusion which usually attends it, has no real Foundation, but is grounded upon Mistake and a deluded Imagination. Now, as to the first, I have Experience clearly on my Side: For  
every

every one, who is not wholly given up to a reprobate Sense, must own, from his own Experience, that Sin lying upon a Conscience, is a Thorn that never ceases to gall and fret till it be plucked up: It is like an Imposthume in the Body; and as it is impossible for the Body to be at Ease till the Imposthume be opened, and the corrupt Matter let out; so it is no less impossible for a Sinner's Conscience to be at Ease, till it be fully laid open by a sincere Confession. So that, let a Sinner flatter himself as he pleases, Experience will convince him, that nothing but Plain-dealing, and frankly declaring his Sins without Artifice or Disguise, will ever procure him that which is the greatest Blessing of Life, *viz.* a true and solid Peace of Mind,

And as to the other Part, *viz.* that the Confusion a Penitent suffers in confessing his Sins is all grounded upon Mistake, I need but shew, that the Fear he has to lose his Confessor's Esteem by it, is only vain and imaginary: For it would be very strange if that, which is the only Means to restore a Sinner to God's Favour and Esteem, should lessen him in the Opinion of God's Minister. But let me tell you, the Thing is quite otherwise; because whatever Guilt a Person is charged with, an humble and sincere Confession makes Atonement for it; and is so far from discrediting the Penitent, that nothing recommends him more effectually to the Esteem, and even tender Affections of his ghostly Father; for 'tis then he regards the Penitent as a true Copy of the Prodigal Son returning to his Father. Besides, every one ought to do that Justice to his Confessor, as to believe he understands his Duty better, than to entertain Sentiments directly opposite to those of Almighty God; for God regards a Sinner, when he returns to him by true Repentance, with the same Love, as if he had never been guilty of any Sin.

It is true, a Confessor cannot have an infallible Assurance of the Repentance of the Party who presents



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sents himself before him: However, he is always bound to suppose it, as long as nothing appears to ground a contrary Judgment; and every one may be assured, that one of the best Marks he can have of the good Disposition of a Penitent, is, to find him frank and sincere in opening his Conscience to him; whereas if he has Reason to suspect him guilty of Double-dealing, he cannot but entertain a very uncomfortable Opinion of him.

But here give me Leave to ask a Person concerned in this Crime, what it is he proposes to himself? Does he ever intend to confess the Sin he has concealed, or not? If not, then he renounces all Hopes of Salvation, and resolves directly to damn himself: And what a desperate Resolution is this, in one who believes there are eternal Flames prepared for those who die in mortal Sin! But if he resolves to confess it sometime or other, why not sooner as well as later? Nay, why not at first, as well as afterwards? For the longer he runs on in this Course, the harder it will be for him to get out of it, because all his Confessions, since his first Abuse of the Sacrament, being void and null, must be looked back into and repeated.

And is not the tearing open so many old Sores, and the unravelling a Conscience perplexed with Multiplicity of Sins, a Task that will put him to a much greater shame and Confusion, than what he pretended to decline at first? Is it not much easier, think you, to confess a single Sin, tho' ever so grievous in itself, than when it comes attended with a long Train of other Sins, besides the grievous Aggravation of Sacrilege? This therefore being the unavoidable Consequence of sacrilegious Confessions, in Relation to one who is not resolutely bent upon damning himself, 'tis evident, that all Delays and Put-offs in this Matter, cannot but increase the very Difficulty upon which they are grounded, and serve to no other Purpose.

pose than to cut out Work for a more melancholy Repentance, and a more mortifying Shame.

But some, perhaps, will tell me, they depend upon an easier Expedient, *viz.* of making one Confession for all, upon their Death-bed : For then, say they, we care not what our Confessor thinks of us, But suppose this fine Project should miscarry ; suppose they should suddenly die, or be out of their Senses in their last Sickness, what then becomes of them ? Are they not lost without Remedy ? However, allowing them the fairest Chance, it is too much to be feared, that they who confess not till they just feel themselves dropping into Destruction, are so disposed at Heart, that they would not even confess then, had they any Prospect of a longer Life : And they must give me Leave to tell them, that a Confession made with this Disposition, is but a very unsafe Bottom to hazard their Salvation upon.

I say not this to encourage Despondency in any one, who should prove so unhappy as to have put Things upon the last Hazard ; because, whatever his Case may be, endeavouring to repent and make his Peace with God, is certainly the best Thing he can do, at any Time whatever, and the last Moments of his Life cannot be better employed, than in a Work so necessary as that of confessing and repenting : However, I think myself bound to deter all here present, from hazarding their Salvation upon so great an uncertainty, as letting Things come to that Pass, that a Death-bed Repentance is all they have to depend on.

To conclude : If any here present be in that miserable State, I conjure you to look, and enter into yourselves, that you may discover the dangerous Condition to which your Salvation is exposed ; to open your Eyes, and awake from that Lethargy. Consider, it is the Devil that deceives you, and raises in you that wicked Shame, or that foolish Fear, by  
which

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which he would work your eternal Damnation, as he has done to many others of your Age and Condition. In a Word, dear Christians, Almighty God is not to be mocked; and those who designedly put off the confessing their Sins till they come to die, will, I fear, find by woeful Experience, that they have only played the Devil's Game for him, and been industrious in laying Snares to their own Souls. What therefore I recommend to you, is, to beseech Almighty God to preserve you from this fatal Blindness; and infuse into your Souls the Spirit of Truth, that you may ever abominate all Insincerity or Double-dealing; so that you may return from the Sacrament of Penance with a clear Conscience of having related all your Sins, and Circumstances of them, which is the greatest Comfort of this Life, and will be a powerful Means of bringing you to eternal Happiness in the next.

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DISC. V.

*On SATISFACTION.*

*Do Fruits worthy of Penance.* Luc. iii. 8.

I Have informed you, dear Christians, before, that Penance consists of three Parts, *viz. Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction*: Of the two former I have already treated; it remains therefore, that I now say something of *Satisfaction*, which is the third and last Part of the Sacrament of Penance, and which consists in doing or suffering something, to repair in some manner the Injury we do to God by our Sins. I say, to repair in some manner; because the great Reparation for Sin was performed by our Saviour *Christ*, who by his precious Blood and Death has superabundantly repaired the Injury which Sin did to Almighty God, and merited a general Pardon of all  
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the Punishments the divine Justice could require. This Reparation and Satisfaction of *Jesus Christ* (without which you would always have remained incapable of making the least Satisfaction to God, and by Consequence of ever returning again unto his Grace and Favour) has opened and facilitated a Way to a Reconciliation with God after Sin.

Now, as it is in his Power, who receives a Person again into his Favour, by whom he has been offended, to admit him on such Conditions as he shall think fit, and either to remit him all the Punishment, or to oblige him to undergo only Part of it; it has pleased the divine Wisdom, in respect of us, to make use of both one and the other of these two Ways of Reconciliation, tho' more ordinarily of the second. For in Baptism, he receives you into his Grace, and remits you all the Punishment due to your Sins; but in Penance he remits you only the eternal Punishment; so still reserves some temporal Pains to be suffered by the Penitent, to the end that the Penitent may satisfy on his Part, according to his Power. In undergoing of this Temporal Punishment, consists the *Satisfaction* of which I now speak, and which is the third Part of Penance.

And this Satisfaction for our Sins, at least in Will and Desire, is as much required of the penitent Sinner, as Contrition and Confession; yet this Part of Penance is, commonly speaking, of all others the most neglected, as if it were enough, even for great Sinners, to repent and accuse themselves of their Offences, and to receive Absolution. They are very apt to forget the Punishment due to Sin, and their Obligation to repair the Injury done to Almighty God, and to endeavour to satisfy the divine Justice, by such Works of Penance as may have some Proportion to their Offences. 'Tis this great Neglect, especially in these latter Ages, which many times makes Penance defective, and is frequently the Occasion why Persons relapse into the same Sins, and  
make



make little or no Advantage by the Sacrament of Penance.

I shall therefore in this Discourse, *first*, Propose to you the Necessity of Satisfaction: and, *2dly*, The Manner and different Ways by which you must endeavour to satisfy the divine Justice, in Punishment of the Sins you have committed.

Nothing is more certain than that every Offence deserves Punishment; and the greater the Offence, the Punishment likewise (according to the Rules of Justice) ought to be so much greater: For as St. Cyprian says, the more we have offended, the more we ought to weep; let the Penance, says he, be no less than the Crime; and the greater the Crime; the greater the Satisfaction. You ought to remember that every Sin is an Offence against the infinite Majesty of God, and every deadly or mortal Sin makes him who commits it liable to eternal Punishments in the Flames of Hell.

'Tis true, such is the Mercy and Goodness of God, that whensoever any one is truly penitent, and with right Dispositions makes use of the Sacrament of Penance, he is pleased to remit and forgive both the Guilt and eternal Punishment which we have incurred by our Sins; yet, generally speaking, a Temporal Punishment still remains due to our Offences, as we find from the Practice of the Old Testament; nay, even from the Beginning of the World. When Almighty God pardoned *Adam* his Sin, he condemned him to labour during his whole Life in Punishment thereof: When he pardoned *David* his Sins of Adultery and Murder, he told him by his Prophet, that he should be chastised by the Death of his Child; and he remitted him nothing of all the Menaces with which he threatened him by the same Prophet, that he himself should see the Dishonour of his House, Dissention among his Children, and other Misfortunes which were foretold

foretold him, and all which came to pass. There are a vast Number of the like Examples in the holy Scriptures, which shew evidently that God doth not pardon Sins, but with an Obligation of doing Penance. Now 'tis to clear this Debt, 'tis to expiate this temporal Punishment due to our Sins, that Satisfaction is necessary for every penitent Sinner.

You may distinguish two kinds of Satisfaction: The first is what is called a *Sacramental Satisfaction*; by which is understood that Satisfaction, those Prayers or Works of Penance, which are enjoined by the Priest when you come to the Sacrament of Penance; and this is necessary for the Validity of the Sacrament (at least as to the Will and Intent of satisfying.) So that Penitents are to remember, that they lie under a strict Obligation of actually performing the Penances enjoined them, as well those that are prescribed by way of Remedies and Preservatives against future Relapses, as those that are enjoined in Punishment of their past Offences. They must likewise be careful to perform their Penance in the Spirit of Devotion, and with the Dispositions of a penitential Heart, and not in an unthinking, tepid, negligent Manner, as too often it happens, whereby they lose the greatest Part of the Benefit and Merit they might otherwise have. The second is a *voluntary Satisfaction*; by which every one, who has a true Sense of his Duty to God, and of the Grievousness and Multitude of his past Offences, endeavours voluntarily to punish himself for the Sins he has committed.

But perhaps some one will say, that the Sacrament of Penance blotteth out all Sins; what Necessity then is there to use voluntary Punishments, whereby we may satisfy the divine Justice for Sins remitted? To which I answer, That altho' the Sacrament of Penance cancelleth and blotteth out all Sins, yet it doth not blot out all the Pain or temporal Punishment

ment, as I said before; and this evidently appears from the Scriptures, and may be abundantly shewed, that Almighty God sometimes remitteth to a penitent Sinner his Faults, but chastiseth him with temporal Afflictions, to the End that Sin may not remain altogether unpunished.

Now, the End of both these Satisfactions is to repair, as much as you are able, the Injuries done to Almighty God by your Sins. Satisfaction is an Act of Justice, which therefore ought to have some Proportion to your Offences; and certainly if you consider the infinite Majesty of God, who is provoked by your Sins; if you reflect on your own Ingratitude, on so many Benefits and Favours which you have slighted, on so many Graces which you have abused, you cannot possibly imagine, that so short, and so small Penances, as are commonly enjoined in the Sacrament of Penance, bear any Proportion to your Offences. You have perhaps deserved to be forever punished with the Devils in Hell, you have ungratefully rebelled against God, preferred your own Will and Pleasure before the Will and Pleasure of the Almighty: Perhaps you are guilty of several mortal Sins, and can you think that a few short Prayers, said perhaps with little or no Attention, are sufficient to satisfy and atone for the Guilt of so many Crimes? Is this to do Fruits worthy of Penance?

Give me leave to put you in mind, how different your Penances and Satisfactions now are, from those that were enjoined to penitent Sinners in former Ages; you need but look on the penitential Canons, to know what was the ancient Discipline of the Church for many Ages: You will find several Years of severe Punishments and Penance in Sack-cloth and Ashes, in the Exercise of Prayer and Fasting, enjoined by the Ministers of the Church, and practised by all that were truly penitent for Sins, which (alas!) are now-a-days grown very common. For Example, a Person who had fallen from his Religion was

to do Penance for the Space of ten Years ; any one that had sworn by Heaven, by God's holy Name, or by any of his Creatures, was to fast fifteen Days with only Bread and Water ; whosoever had been guilty of Laughing or talking in the Church during the Time of divine Service, his Penance was to fast ten Days with Bread and Water ; if any one had cursed his Parents, he was to undergo the like Penance for forty Days. For one Sin of Fornication was enjoined three Years Penance ; for that of Adultery, five, or sometimes seven Years Penance, and so proportionably as to other Sins.

And what was this Penance of so many Years, of 5, 10, 15, 20 Years, and oftentimes to the End of their Lives, which used to be enjoined for these Sins ? It was not to say some short Prayers, but it was to fast most of the Time, at least three Days a Week with Bread and Water ; it was to be separated from the holy Communion ; it was to stand upon *Sundays* and *Holy-days* at the Church Door cloathed with Sackcloth, and there to beg the Prayers of the Faithful : This was what they called doing Penance, these were the Satisfactions enjoined in the Sacrament of Penance. Such was the Practice and Discipline of the Church for many Ages ; and you may assure yourselves dear Christians, altho' the Church has judged it expedient to moderate the Severity of her ancient Discipline by condescending to the Weakness of her Children now-a-days, yet Sin is no less offensive to Almighty God, the Justice of God is the same. No less Punishment is due to Sin now than in former Times, nay, if our Crimes are greater and more numerous than theirs who lived in those pure Times, our Penance and Satisfaction ought to be greater according to what Almighty God prescribed to *Moses* in the 25th of *Deteronomy*, (Vers 7.) *The Number of Stripes shall be according to the Greatness of the Offence* : 'Tis what we are again taught in the *Revelations* of *St. John*. (Ch. xviii.



(Ch. xviii. 7.) *As much as the Sinner has indulged himself and followed his unlawful Pleasures, so much in Proportion shall he be tormented and punished in this World or the next.*

The Consideration of such severe Penances as were formerly practised in the Church, and which are now due to your Sins, ought to make you blush at your own Weaknesses; the very Thoughts of so many Years severe Punishments of Penance in Hair-cloth, Prayer and Fasting, fright tepid and loose Livres: The greatest Part of Christians now-a-days content themselves with doing their Penance, but they are for doing little or no Penance at all; they are for Satisfaction which is performed in few Words, in some short Prayers, but little or no Appearance in their Works. In the mean Time it is certain, that great Sinners ought to be great Penitents, and whatever Penance is enjoined them in Confession seems little to those who are true Converts, because 'tis nothing in Comparison of what they have deserved; altho' Sacramental Satisfaction is more meritorious and of greater Force than any other in order to expiate our Sins.

But you must not content yourselves with that little Penance which is enjoined you when you come to the Sacrament of Penance: If you love God, and hate Sin as you ought, you must join your own Endeavours, and by voluntary Satisfaction strive to repair the Injury done to Almighty God, and punish yourselves for your past Offences: 'Tis an Obligation incumbent upon every one without Exception. Is there any one that can say he was never guilty of Sin? Grant that this were true, as 'tis most certainly false; that every one who pretends to be a Christian ought to imitate our Saviour *Christ*; and we find by the Gospel that the Life of *Christ*, tho' he had never sinned, nor could possibly sin, was notwithstanding a Life of continual Penance: But this is far from being your Case, you were all born in Sin, and besides

that, you have all offended in many Things; even the most virtuous are subject to many Failings and Imperfections; 'tis upon this Account that they are indispensibly obliged to do Penance; for as *St. Augustin* says, there is no Sin but must be punished. Again, how few are there that have not been some Time or other guilty of mortal Sins? if so, tho' it were but by the Guilt of one mortal Sin, you have then certainly deserved an eternal Punishment, and all the Satisfaction you can make, all the Punishments you can inflict upon yourselves in this Life, are all nothing to what you have deserved; you have then Reason to cry out with the Prophet *Jeremy*, (*Lam. iii. 12.*) *'Tis only by the Mercy of God that you have not been lost for ever.* You have then Reason to acknowledge with holy *David*, (*Psal. xciii. 17.*) *Unless our Lord had helped me and spared me, my sinful Soul had already taken up her eternal Habitation in the Flames of Hell.* You must imitate the same royal Penitent, who after he had sinned had always his Sins before his Eyes. (*Psal. 1. 5.*) This ought to be the Disposition of every penitent Sinner; he ought never to forget that by sinning he has deserved a Place in Hell, and to be for ever tormented with the Devils in those scorching Flames. This Consideration would make every one cry out with holy *Job*, (*Job xxxiii. 27.*) *I have sinned, I have truly been guilty, and I have not been dealt with as I deserved;* that is, the Mercy of God has been pleased to spare me, to change the eternal Punishment which I deserved, into a short and temporal Punishment: for this Reason I will not spare myself, but will seriously endeavour, by punishing myself, to repair the Injury I have done to God, and make some Satisfaction at least for my past Ingratitude and Disloyalty to Almighty God. But if this ought to be the Disposition of every Sinner who has had the Misfortune by any mortal Sin to have forfeited the Grace of God, and to have

been once guilty of an eternal Punishment, what shall I say, or what can I say, to those who have fallen into a multitude of grievous Sins? who, for a long Time have been Slaves to their unlawful Passions, who can scarce number the mortal Sins they have committed? All I can say is, that whether we consult the Rules of Justice, or the Principles of Faith, or the Maxims of Reason, we must from all of them conclude that the Term of their Penance must be the Term of their Life; they cannot but look upon the Remainder of their Days as too short to make sufficient Satisfaction for so many Sins. In fine, they must employ their utmost Endeavours, and lay hold on all Occasions to practise Self-denial, to mortify their Bodies and Senses, to punish themselves here, that they may avoid those endless Torments which they have often deserved, to appease the divine Justice, to repair the Injury done to the divine Majesty by so many Offences. But if you ask, in what Manner every Sinner, that is truly penitent, must practise this voluntary Satisfaction, 'tis what I will now briefly propose to you.

Had you, dear Christians, the true Spirit of Penance, this would teach you and make you comply with the Manner of doing Penance. The Saints who had never been guilty of the like Sins as you have committed, who had no such pressing Motives as you have to do to Penance, they lived notwithstanding in the Practice of severe Penances; because they were animated with the Spirit of Penance. How comes it to pass that they loved and desired to suffer, and you seek your own Ease and Content? that they laboured to curb their natural Inclinations, and punish themselves, and that you on the contrary pamper and indulge yourselves, and hate all that is troublesome to Nature? The true Reason is, that they were led by the Spirit of God, and you by the Spirit of the World: Their Souls were possessed with the Fear of God's Judgments, their Hearts were in-

flamed with the Love of God's Goodness, they had lively Horror and Detestation of offending God above all Things. These Dispositions made all their Labours, all their Penances, all their Satisfactions, seem sweet and easy to them. But Sinners have their Affections quite turned another Way; they are in love with the World, and in love with themselves; they hate to be deprived of their own Will and their sensual Pleasures; they love nothing of the Spirit of Penance, and therefore they have as little of the Practice of it; they have nothing at all of a penitential Life, which is accompanied with Mortification and voluntary Satisfactions; these they leave to the Saints, or at least to such as have shut themselves up in Cloisters and Monasteries, that is, they leave the Practice of Penance to those who stand in least need of it. Can any thing be so unreasonable? Is it possible that Men can think Punishments due to the Innocent and not to the Guilty? that Penance must be the Practice of the Saints, and that they who are Sinners are to be exempt from it? To correct so dangerous a Mistake, let me put you in mind of the Admonition of St. *John Baptist*, *Do Fruits worthy of Penance.*

There are many Christians who come, at least sometimes to the Sacrament of Penance, and yet are like the Fig-Tree which our Saviour came to, as we read in the 21st of St. *Matthew* (Verse 19.) he looked for Figs upon it, but he found nothing but Leaves: Such is the Condition of those who appear to make good Purposes and Resolutions; but they are Purposes and Appearances only, and come to no Effect. Others perhaps are a Degree nearer to a true Penance, and may be said not only to bring forth Leaves, but Buds and Blossoms too; they keep their Resolutions for a Time, but any strong Temptation, like a pinching Wind, nips them in the Bud, and all these flourishing Blossoms, all these fair Prospects,



spects, come to nothing. Others again bring forth some Kind of Fruits of Repentance, they are willing to suffer something for their Sins, but it is after an imperfect Manner; they cannot be said to comply with the Admonition of St. *John Baptist*, which is, not only to bring forth Fruits, but also *Fruits worthy of Penance*; that is, to continue in the Practice of such a Penance, and of such Satisfactions as have some Proportion to the Number and Grievousness of their Sins.

But some may perhaps say, that our Saviour *Christ* has abundantly satisfied for the Sins of the whole World, and therefore there can be no need of our Satisfactions. 'Tis true, dear Christians, the Satisfactions of *Christ* were infinitely more than sufficient to satisfy the divine Justice for all the Sins and Offences of Mankind; yet they will avail you nothing unless they be applied to you, and they are chiefly applied to you by the holy Sacraments, and particularly by the Sacrament of Penance; as to a Remission of those Sins you have fallen into after Baptism. Besides, it is the Will of God that you do something on your Part, that you join your Sufferings and your Satisfactions with those of your Saviour *Christ's*, which makes them acceptable. For this Reason St. *Paul* tells us, (1 Cor. ix. 27.) *That he chastised his Body*; and again tells the *Colossians* (Ch. i. 24.) *That he fulfilled in his Body those Things that were wanting to the Passion of Christ*, that is, by punishing himself and suffering with *Christ*, he endeavoured to partake of the Sufferings, Merits, and Satisfactions of *Christ*; and doubtless there is no more effectual Means to satisfy the divine Justice for your Offences, than by offering up to God with all Humility the Satisfactions of his divine Son, particularly when they are offered up at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Let me therefore advise you, never to be present at that holy Sacrifice without joining your Oblation

with that of the Priest, and with all the Devotion and Humility you are capable of, begging of God to accept in Satisfaction for your Sins, the Merits and Satisfactions of his only Son: This is the first and chief Way of satisfying for your Sins.

Next, the satisfactory Works of Penance may be reduced to these three, Prayer, Fasting and Alms-deeds. Under Prayer is included thinking or meditating, reading or hearing of good Books, instructing of others, and also being present at divine Service, and those Sermons and Instructions which are given. And as all penitential and satisfactory Works are supposed to include something that is more or less painful and troublesome to you, so you ought cheerfully and joyfully to undergo that Difficulty, that Trouble, that Tedioufness which you perhaps find by Experience in your Morning and Evening Devotions, in spending *Sundays* and *Holidays* well, and coming diligently to the Service of God, and being present with Devotion there; in frequenting the Sacraments, and the like. He that does not perform well these Satisfactions, which belong to Prayer, the Service of God, and the Sacraments, 'tis much to be feared, he is for little or no Satisfaction, he is for doing no Penance at all.

Fasting is another Means to satisfy for your Sins; 'tis what the holy Scripture in many Places recommends to you, as well as the Example of *Christ* and his Saints; you can scarce read the Life of any Saint, but you will always find that they mortified themselves by Fasting: And can you who are Sinners, think much to keep exactly and willingly those Fasts at least that are commanded by the Church? Under this of Fasting, are likewise comprehended all those Self-denials, and Mortifications of the Body and Senses, as Watching, Kneeling, Labouring, Retirement, and whatsoever is troublesome and painful to you. Should you look upon the Example of the

the Saints, and think well upon your own Sins, what Shame and Confusion would it be, to reflect that they had so many Contrivances to mortify themselves, that they did so much for the Love of God, and to obtain Heaven, and you so little!

A third Means of satisfying is by Alms-deeds, according to every one's Abilities and Circumstances. Remember the Widow's two Mites, which were so acceptable to Almighty God. *Redeem thy Sins with Alms-deeds*, said the Prophet Daniel to Nabuchadonoser (*Dan. iv. 24.*) *As Water extinguisheth Fire*, says Ecclesiasticus, (*Ecel. iii. 33.*) *so doth Alms free us from Sin*. In fine, all these three Ways of satisfying for your Offences, were recommended by the Angel to Toby (*Tob. xii. 8.*) *Prayer joined with Fasting and Alms-deeds, is better than to lay up Treasures of Gold.*

Besides these Means already mentioned, you may and ought to endeavour to satisfy the divine Justice for the Sins you have committed, by suffering with Patience, with Resignation, willingly and even joyfully; those Crosses, those Contradictions, those Afflictions, whatsoever they are, that happen unto you by order of divine Providence; though they happen unto you against your Will, yet by receiving them in this Manner you make them voluntary, and by offering them up to God they become a grateful Sacrifice, and a powerful Means to satisfy for your Offences.

Thus I have shewn you the Necessity and Obligation incumbent upon every one, to make it his serious Endeavours, by Works of Penance, to repair the Injury done to the divine Majesty by Sin, and to satisfy as much as in you lies for your past Offences. I have put you in mind, that the chief Means, is, by offering up to Almighty God the Satisfaction of our Saviour *Christ*; to join Prayer, Fasting and Alms-deeds; to suffer patiently and

willingly whatever Crosses and Afflictions happen to you by the divine Appointment.

Be always mindful, that you must do worthy Fruits of Penance. The whole Life of every Christian, how innocent soever he has lived, ought to be a continual Practice of Penance (says the Council of Trent) it is in this that you must offer Violence to yourselves. *The Kingdom of Heaven* says our Saviour *Christ*, (Matth xi. 12.) *is to be taken by Force*, and they only obtain it, who offer Violence to themselves: At least there is no other Way, but that of Penance, for Sinners to be saved, and obtain the Kingdom of eternal Bliss.

## DISC. I.

### ON EXTREME UNCTION.

*Is any one sick among you, let him call for the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil in the Name of the Lord: And the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick Man, and the Lord shall ease him; and if he be in Sins, they shall be forgiven him.* St. James v. 14. 15.

**A**LTHO', dear Christians, the Enemy of Mankind (the Devil) always goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour; yet there is no Time of our Lives that he attacks us with greater Vigour than when we are departing out of this World; and the Reason is, because he knows that then he hath but a short Time to make his Assaults upon us: For his Hopes being then at the last, he strives all he can against us. *The Devil is come to you*, says St. John, (Apoc. xii. 12.) *having great Wrath, knowing that he hath but a short Time.* Some he tempts to Presumption, others to Despair; some by too much Love for Friends and Relations; some think of nothing but of the Riches and Pleasures which



which they are going to leave; others through too much Desire of Life, will not hear of Death, nor prepare themselves for it: But his common Temptation is to terrify Sinners with Frights and Fears at their past Sins. *They shall come fearful in Thought of their Sins, and their Iniquities which are against them shall convince them,* says the Wise Man, (Sap. iv).

Hence St. Cyril of Alexandria writeth; ‘What Terror, says he, what Trembling, what a Combat attends a Soul going out of the Body! Since in that dreadful Hour a Multitude of wicked Spirits will then be present to you, laying open and objecting to you all the Sins you have ever committed in your whole Life, either in Thought, Word, Deed, or Omission.’

St. John Climacus, a famous Writer and worthy of Credit, relates a remarkable Example of this Kind, of one Stephen a Hermit, who after he had lived a great Part of his Life in Solitude, Fasting, Watching, and Praying, at last he fell sick, and when he was at the Point of Death, the Devil set upon him, and objected many Things to him; sometimes he cried out (so that all who were present heard him) So it is indeed, I confess I did it, but I have fasted and prayed so many Years for it; other Times he cried out, Thou lyest, I did not do it; and again he said, It is so indeed; but I have shed Tears for it; yet notwithstanding, said he, there is Need of Mercy. This Example ought to make you be wary in all your Actions, and to fly Sin, and all the Occasions of Sin; since this holy Man, who had lived near Forty Years a retired and holy Life, was so hard put to it at the Hour of his Death.

St. Hilarion, (whose Perfections St. Hieron describes) when he came to die, was oppressed with such a Fear and Horror of Death, that to encourage his Soul he said, (Vide Vita Hilar.) ‘Goforth my

‘ Soul, why dost thou fear, thou hast now served  
 ‘ thy Lord almost these seventy Years, and art thou  
 ‘ afraid to die ?

Now, if the Saints themselves have been thus terrified at the Hour of Death, what may Sinners expect who have committed numberless and grievous Sins, and that perhaps lately too, and have done little or no Satisfaction, and have but few good Works for their Comfort ? Upon this Account our Saviour *Christ* was pleased to institute the Sacrament of *Extreme Unction*, to help and defend us against the Temptations of the Devil, in that last and terrible Hour. For if *Christ* has instituted Sacraments, that we might be helped and succoured both in our Entrance into the Church, and our Improvement and Progress therein ; ’tis not to be thought that God would be wanting to us in our going out of this World, especially since we never want more Help and Assistance than at the Hour of our Death.

The Council of *Trent*, speaking of this Sacrament, tells us, that all Christians ought to acknowledge the infinite Goodness and Mercy of Almighty God in the Institution of this Sacrament, by which he affords us such excellent Means of procuring our Salvation at every Age, and in every State of Life. At our Birth, by *Baptism* he confers upon us the Life of Grace ; in a more advanced Age he preserves and increases the same by the Sacraments of *Confirmation* and the *Holy Eucharist* ; and, in fine, when we are at the Point of quitting this World, by reason of the Violence of some Distemper, he has instituted the Sacrament of *Extreme Unction*, to procure for us a happy Passage out of this World into a better. We have Need, dear Christians, in these our last Moments, upon which our eternal Happiness or Misery depends, of particular and powerful Helps and Graces ; and for this Reason our Saviour *Christ*, out of pure Love and

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Compassion for us, instituted this Sacrament, as I shall first prove to you in this Discourse. *Secondly*, I will lay before you the Effects and Necessity of it. And *thirdly*, What Care you ought to take in having speedy Recourse to this Sacrament in dangerous Distempers, or such as put you in morab Danger of Death. *Lastly*, I will shew you the principal Dispositions you ought to have, in order to receive the Effects and Graces thereof.

Extreme Unction is a true and proper Sacrament of the new Law, instituted by *Christ* for those who are in Danger of Death by Sickness, or other inward Infirmities, to blot out the Relicks of their Sins, remaining through Negligence or Forgetfulness after the former Sacraments; that thereby their Souls may be strengthened against the Temptations, and fierce Assaults of the Devil and Death; or else that they may recover their bodily Health, if it be expedient to their Salvation. It is called Extreme Unction, because it is only administered in Extremity of Sickness.

To prove that this Sacrament was instituted by *Christ*, there needs no other Proof than the clear Words of St. James, (St. James v. 14, 15.) *If any one be sick among you, let him call in the Priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil in the Name of our Lord: And the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick Man, and our Lord will raise him up; and if he be in Sins, they shall be forgiven him.* By which Words, you see, the Practice of the Catholick Church is clearly proved, and Extreme Unction declared to be a Sacrament; that is, an outward Sign ordained by *Christ* for our Sanctification. The outward Sign is the *external anointing with Oil*; which declares the proper *Matter* of this Sacrament, *viz.* Oil of Olives blest by a Bishop: The *Form* is the Words uttered together with the Unction, and is expressed by these Words of the Apostle; *Let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil*; which, in as much

as they are joined together with the *Matter*, do make the Sacrament. And that this outward Sign causeth Grace, the Words following do declare, where it says, that Sins are remitted, which cannot be but by Grace being received. And hence it follows, that *Christ* instituted this Sacrament: For the Apostles had not Power to institute such Signs, neither could St. *James* have promised Remission of Sins by it, if *Christ* had not instituted and commanded it. It is true, *Luther* rejects this Epistle of St. *James*, (*Luth. Præf. ad Nov. Testam.*) denying it to be canonical, and calling it an Epistle of Straw; but the Authority of the whole Church has declared it to be canonical, and if the whole Church be not sufficient for *Luther*, we will put *Calvin* into the Balance against him, (*Calvin L. 3. Instit. C. 17.*) an Author, at least, of equal Weight with him, who holds it for canonical.

As to the Ministers of this Sacrament, these Words of St. *James*, *Let him bring in the Priests of the Church*, declare and determine; namely, such only as are actually promoted, in Virtue of holy Ordination, unto Episcopal or Priestly Function; so that whenever the Scriptures in the New Testament, speaking of Church Ministers, use the Word *Presbyter*, or *Senior*, it always means, says St. *Hierom*, (*Epist. 85. ad Evag.*) one invested with Priestly or Episcopal Dignity. Besides, the Fathers in the Council of *Trent*, and all Catholick Writers, understand by the Words *Presbyters of the Church*, such only as are Priests truly ordained, whether they be Bishops or mere Priests. Neither could the Apostles mean by Priests of the Church *Lay-Elders*, as some of our Adversaries would have it, because they are not Church Ministers, taken in a proper Sense.

And as to what *Calvin*, and some of his Followers assert, that the Use of Extreme Uñction was not designed for all Ages, but only for the Apostles Time, is absolutely false, and condemned by the Council of *Trent*, [*Sess. 14. Doct. de Sacram.*

Extr.



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Extr. Unct.] For in as much as the Apostle asserts absolutely, putting no Limitation of Time, *if any be sick among you*, he plainly shews *Extreme Unction* to be of perpetual Use to the Catholick Church to the End of the World, which is essential to a Sacrament of the New Law: And we find it has been practised in all Ages. St. *Augustin*, St. *Chrysostom*, *Origen*, and other Fathers, expressly exhort [St. Aug. in Sermon. 215.---St. Chrys. L. 3. de Sacerd. Orig. Hom. 2. in Levit.] that the Sick do carefully receive this Sacrament; and you will acknowledge they had great Reason so to do, if you do but consider the admirable Effects thereof.

These Effects part regard the Body and part the Soul, as you may gather from these Words of St. *James*, (C. v. 15.) *The Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick Man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in Sin, his Sins will be forgiven him*; that is to say, their Prayers shall not be barren and without Effect, if made with Faith, and joined to this Sacrament; because this sacred Unction will bestow upon the sick Person the Health of his Body, if Almighty God sees it more expedient and conducive to the Salvation of his Soul, as both the Council of *Florence* and *Trent* declares. And I have sometimes seen sick Persons given over by the Physicians, who were so persuaded of the Efficacy of this Sacrament, even for the restoring of corporal Health, that they preferred it to the best Remedies prescribed by the most experienced Physicians; and this Sovereign Antidote both of Body and Soul, received by them with Faith and Confidence, restored them to their Health; in as much, that it may be said of this Sacrament alone, that as others only tend to the healing or strengthening of the Soul, this, besides that Effect, joins also the restoring of the Health of the Body impaired by Sickness: 'Tis for this Reason, that this Sacrament is called by the Church in her Councils, and by the holy Fathers in their Writings, *Medicina Corporis & Animæ*;

*Anima*; that is to say, a Remedy both for Body and Soul: And as natural Remedies only receive their Force and Virtue from the Nature which God has given to different Plants and Minerals, so this sovereign Remedy receives also its Force and Efficacy from the Blood and Merits of *Jesus Christ*.

Now, as to the Effects which this Sacrament produces in the Soul, there are three or four principal ones. The first is, the Remission of Sin; for altho' this Sacrament is not principally instituted to confer the first Grace, but only the Increase of it, nevertheless if the sick Person should be oppressed by any Sin, even a mortal one, which he has, through an innocent Ignorance, not confessed, it would be effaced by Virtue of this Sacrament, according to that of St. *James*, *If he be in Sins they shall be remitted him*. You must here observe the Apostle says, *If he be in Sin*, because he supposes the sick Person has already received the Sacrament of Penance, and that thereby his Sins have been remitted. But if he has not rightly accomplished Confession, and knows it not, or if by human Frailty he has committed a mortal Sin after his Confession, and is ignorant of it, that is to say, all our hidden or unknown Sins, whether mortal or venial, will be remitted by this Sacrament.

The second Effect, is, that this Sacrament destroys the woeful Remains or Relicks of Sin. This appears from the Council of *Trent*, (Sess. 14. C. 1.) and from the Words which are made use of in the Form of this Sacrament, which are as follows: 'Through this holy Unction, and by his own most tender Mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever Sins thou hast committed by thy Sight;' and so of the other Senses. But that you may comprehend what I mean by the Relicks of Sin, I call it a certain Weakness and spiritual Languishing, which remains, and is the Consequence of evil Habits contracted by the frequent Acts of Sin, which gives us

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a certain Bent, and inclines our perverse Wills to fall back again into Sin. Some Divines understand by the Remains or Relicks of Sin, all Sins both *mortal* and *venial* of which you have not received the Remission, and into which you have fallen after having received the Sacrament of Penance and Communion; which may happen two Ways, *viz.* If any one, for Example, after having confessed and communicated, shall have fallen into a mortal Sin, which he should not remember, and not confessing should not obtain the Remission of it: Or if he had received the Sacrament of Penance and the Eucharist, without due Disposition; these are the Remains which are effaced by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: And therefore in administering of this Sacrament, we anoint the exterior Senses, which are as the Doors by which Sin enters, to teach you that by this anointing you are purged and cleansed from all your Sins; and for this Reason the Priest administering this Sacrament, exhorts the sick Person to excite in himself a hearty Sorrow and Contrition at the Time when he anoints him.

Again: By the Remains of Sin is to be understood a certain perplexing interior Grief, Apprehension and Anguish, which is caused by the Remembrance of your Sins, and puts you in a Concern and Trouble, seeing yourselves ready to be presented before a terrible Judge: Your past Sins will then appear more heinous than when you committed them; but the Virtue of this Sacrament is very effectual to remove the Troubles and Afflictions with which the Soul of a dying Person is often agitated; it will strengthen and support her against the violent and continual Attacks of her spiritual Enemies; so that this Reason alone, if there were no other, would oblige Persons in Danger of Death by Sickness, to have Recourse to this divine Remedy.

The third Effect of this Sacrament is, that it gives Grace to the sick Person to make a good Use  
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of all his Pains and Sufferings during his Sickneſs, and diſpoſes him to reſign and give himſelf entirely up to the Will of Almighty God, either for Death or for Life.

The laſt and principal Effect of this Sacrament, and for which it was chiefly inſtituted by our Saviour *Chriſt*, is, to give us Strength to ſurmount the Aſſaults of the Devil, which are much more violent and dangerous in theſe our laſt Moments, than in any Part of our Lives: For he ſees the Time approaches when he muſt either gain or loſe his Prey; he doubles his Efforts, and makes uſe of all his Art to draw a poor Soul into his Snares: Add to this, the Power and Number of theſe dreadful Enemies, and the Weakneſs and Incapacity of reſiſting in the Perſon attacked, never leſs capable of reſiſting than when his Sickneſs and Pains have weakened him more and more every Day. And if your Bodies, dear Chriſtians, even in the Time of Health, are a Clog upon the Faculties of the Soul, what do you think the poor Soul can do at the Point of her Separation? Experience ſufficiently teaches you; that the Time of Sickneſs is the moſt improper for ſpiritual Exerciſes; and if that be ſo, what muſt you ſay of the laſt Sickneſs? Frame to yourſelves a ſick Man tormented with Pains, which give him no Reſt, ſurrounded by his Enemies, who ſeeing there is no Time to be loſt, never ſtir from his Pillow, but continue to aſſault him with the moſt violent Attacks. What can a ſick Man do in the miſt of ſo many Enemies, who have ſworn his Ruin; ſtrong and cunning, when he is weaken'd, both in Body and Mind, by the Force of his Sickneſs? What will he answer for the Sins they ſhall reproach him with? How will he reject their evil Suggestions? What Fright will he be in at the Sight of thoſe horrid Spectators, who will endeavour to make him believe there is no Hopes of Heaven for him? If the greateſt Saints found themſelves ſo ſurprized at this  
terrible



terrible Combat, what must we think of a Sinner, if God, out of his Goodness, does not succour him? But by what Means is this to be done? By Means, dear Christians, of this Sacrament, which strengthens us, encourages us, and furnishes us with Arms to conquer our Enemies.

From what I have said concerning the Effects of this Sacrament, you may easily see how necessary it is, and what Care you ought to take, not to fail to procure it for yourselves and others in the Time of Sicknes, since it may easily happen that a Person may be saved by Means of this Sacrament, who otherwise would infallibly be lost without it: For the very Nature and Institution of it, is to supply in your last Moments what has been wanting in the Use of the other Sacraments; 'tis for this Reason the Council of Trent calls it, *A Perfection of Permanence*; whence it is easy to conclude, that this Sacrament ought not to be neglected, since it is not only very profitable, but even very necessary to a great many Persons.

It is a great Abuse, and a very dangerous Error, invented by the Devil's Malice, to hinder you from overcoming the Assaults in this last Combat of your Lives, to believe that those who receive this Sacrament will infallibly then die, and that after it there is no Hopes of Life remaining. This gross Error is an Effect of the Devil's Hatred towards you, by which he makes it his Endeavour to deprive you of the Helps and Means best, you for avoiding his Snares, and surmounting his Temptations at your Death. Another great Reason why this Sacrament is neglected and deferred when Persons are in Danger of Death, is, for fear of frightening them; as if a Person ought to be afraid to receive a Remedy which may and will restore his Health, if it be profitable and conducing to his Salvation. If then you have the least Faith in the Word of God, if you have the least Love for your Parents, Children, Friends and Relations,

Relations, you ought to be so far from hindering their receiving this Sacrament that you ought to procure it for them. But perhaps you will ask me, How it comes to pass, that so few Persons recover after having received this Sacrament? I answer this Objection with Cardinal *Bellarmino*, who gives two Reasons for it. The first is, That sick Persons, commonly speaking, defer so long the receiving this Sacrament, that they seem to tempt God, and as it were to oblige him to work a Miracle; being the Strength of the sick Person is quite spent. The second Reason is, Because Death is oftentimes more advantageous to the sick Person than Health would be. I add a third Reason, that several sick Persons receive this Sacrament with very little Attention, and scarce any Devotion; but more particularly, because they have not a sufficient Faith in the Power and Efficacy of this Sacrament; relying much more on the Force of natural Remedies than this.

After having shew'd you the Necessity and Efficacy of this Sacrament, I hope there is none here present, who would now neglect to receive it, when in mortal Danger of Death. What therefore remains, is to set before you the Dispositions you ought to have, to receive the Graces annex'to this Sacrament, and to receive it in such a manner, as not to deprive yourselves, by your own Faults, of those Helps and Advantages, which are gained by means of it.

The first Disposition, and as it were the principal one, is to be in the State of Grace, because it is one of those Sacraments which are instituted for the Increase of the Life of Grace, and consequently which presupposes the State of Grace; for this Reason the sick Person ought first to make his Confession; but if he be not in a Condition so to do, he ought at least to excite in his Soul a Sorrow and hearty Repentance of all his Sins, joining his Prayers with those present, in saying the *Confiteor*, to excite in himself

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himself the Sentiments of Compunction and a true Sorrow.

The second Disposition is, a lively Faith in the Force and Efficacy of this Sacrament, representing to himself the most wonderful Effects of it, which I have reckon'd up, confiding in the Divine Goodness to be made Partaker of them: And thus Prayer made with Faith, join'd to this Sacrament, will bring Relief to the sick Person.

The third Disposition is, to receive this Sacrament with Sentiments of Piety and Devotion, by making Acts of Faith, of Love, of Confidence, of Acceptance of his Sickness, of Resignation to the Divine Will, repeating often these Acts, and making them proceed more from the Heart than from the Lips, and letting this be his Employment even under the greatest Anguish of his Distemper. Let him also remember, at the Anointing of every Sense, to beg Pardon of Almighty God for the Sins committed by a bad Use of them.

The fourth and last Disposition is, to have a particular Devotion to our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, agonizing for our Salvation in the Garden of *Gethsemani*, putting ourselves in the same holy Dispositions with him, and like him offering to God the Father our Bodies, our Souls, and our Lives, in a Spirit of Sacrifice; giving him Thanks through the Merits of his beloved Son, for all the Graces and Favours we have received from his divine Bounty, during the whole Course of our Lives. We must also, at that Time, in a more particular manner beg the Prayers and Intercession of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, of our Patrons, our Angel-Guardian, and the Saints to whom we have a particular Devotion.

Remember then, I beseech you, these Dispositions, and neglect not to apply so sovereign and effectual a Remedy whensoever you shall be attacked by any dangerous Sickness. Parents, procure this Sacrament for your Children; and Children, procure it for your  
Parents;

Parents; Friends and Relations, for one another; Masters of Families, for your Servants; and do not deprive them of so Powerful a Help in their greatest Need.

O! dear Christians, ought we not a thousand times to bless Almighty God, in that he has been pleased to institute this Sacrament, this powerful Remedy? Ought we not to beg of those who shall be near us in our last Sickness, not to delay procuring us this Sacrament to the last Extremity? Letting them know, that you are well persuaded the worthy receiving of this Sacrament cannot but be very advantageous both for Body and Soul, and that the best Proof they can give us in our Sickness of a true and sincere Friendship, is to procure this Sacrament for us betimes, and whilst we are in our Senses, that we may be able to enter into those Dispositions I have here mentioned, and to make us partake of those Graces which cannot fail of bringing us to eternal Happiness.

## DISCOURSE I.

### *On the Sacrament of HOLY ORDERS.*

*Neglect not the Grace which is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the Imposition of the Hand of the Presbytery.* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

**A**S *Christ*, dear Christians, has founded a Church here upon Earth, it is not to be doubted, but that he has ordained and instituted Rulers, to keep and govern this his Church in Discipline, and to preserve it in Unity. This is what St. Paul assures us of in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, (Chap. iv. 11.) where he tells us, that *Christ* has given to his Church (not every Man, but) certain Men, to be *Apostles*, *Pastors*, and *Preachers*, who being as it were his Embassadors,



ambassadors, should instruct and edify his Church, and keep his People in the Unity of Faith. And as the Sacraments are necessary for Man's Salvation, so it is necessary for certain Men to be ordained and authorized by God, to administer them faithfully to Man's Salvation.

We find by the holy Scriptures, that there hath been always Temples and holy Places, wherein God appointed Priests, that they might teach and instruct the People, and offer Sacrifice: Wherefore God said to Aaron (Eod. xxix.) *This thou shalt do, that they may be consecrated to me in Priesthood*; who may teach my People, and offer Sacrifice for them. From hence we may learn, that no Man ought to usurp, or take upon him to administer, that which pertains to the Church of Christ, without sufficient Commission from him: And more especially since Christ has been pleased to institute and ordain the Sacrament of *Holy Orders*, wherein Grace or spiritual Power is given to certain Christian Men, (by the outward Sign of Imposition of the Bishop's Hands upon them) to exercise effectually the public Administration of the Church, whereby whatsoever they do in the Church, according to the Institution of Christ and his Church, is ratified, and accepted of by Almighty God.

What therefore I propose in this Discourse, is, First to prove to you in short, from Scripture, Councils, and Fathers, that Holy Orders is a true and proper Sacrament instituted by Christ. Secondly, I will shew you the Effects of it, and the Power given thereby. Thirdly, the different Degrees of Orders and the Office of each Degree. And lastly, the Honour, Respect, and Obedience, the Laity ought to have for the Bishops and Priests of God's Church.

The greater Part of our Adversaries, dear Christians deny *Holy Orders* to be a Sacrament; in order therefore to prove the contrary, we must first consider, what a Sacrament in general is; viz. *An outward*

or visible Sign of invisible Grace instituted by Christ our Lord, by which Grace is given to him who worthily receives it. Now it is certain that Holy Orders is a visible Sign of invisible Grace, and that by Divine Institution, which alone can annex the Gift of Grace to any outward Rite, or Ceremony.

The outward and visible Sign is found in the Imposition of the Bishop's Hands, and Prayer; for we read in the *Acts* of the Apostles (Chap. vi. 6.) that the seven Deacons were ordained in this Manner, *the Apostles praying laid their Hands upon them.* St. Paul and St. Barnabas were ordained after this Manner, as we read in the 13th Chapter (Ver. 3.) of the *Acts*.

The invisible Grace conferred by this Imposition of Hands is attested by St. Paul, (1 Tim. iv. 14.) *Neglect not the Grace that is in thee, which is given thee by Prophecy with the Imposition of the Hands of the Presbytery.* And in his second Epistle to Timothy (Ch. 1. 6.) *I admonish thee that thou stir up the Grace of God, which is in thee by the Imposition of my Hands.*

The general Council of Chalcedon, which was held in the Year of our Lord 451, expressly says, (Act. xv. ap. 2.) that the Grace of the Holy Ghost is conferred in Ordination by Imposition of the Bishop's Hands.

The General Council of Florence also declares *Holy Orders* to be a Sacrament, and even calls it the Sixth: This Council both *Grecians* and *Latins* approve of. In fine, all the Councils of the Church have always acknowledged and looked upon *Holy Orders* to be a true and proper Sacrament.

Let us now see what the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church say to this Point.

*Dionisius*, who lived in the 2d Age, affirms, (5. Eccles. Hierarch. de ritu Ord.) that by *Holy Order* Grace is given to him who is ordained.

St. *Cyprian*, who lived in the third Age, asserts (*De Operibus Cardinalibus.*) the same Doctrine.

St. *Ambrose*, who lived in the fourth Age, says,  
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(L. de dignitat. Sacerd. c. 5.) that *Man imposeth his Hands, but God conferreth the Grace.*

And St. Chrysostome, who lived in the same Age, says, (S. Chrysoſt. de Sacerd.) that *Priesthood is finished on Earth, but ought to be referred into the Number and Order of celeſtial Things.*

In the fifth Age Theodoret teaches, (L. 1. Tim. v.) that *the Grace of the Holy Ghost is given in Ordination.* I should never have done, were I to cite all the Holy Fathers upon this Head: Let it then suffice to hear what the great St. Augustine says upon this Subject, in his second Book against the Epistle of Parmenian, proving that the Sacrament of Order cannot be lost, because Baptism cannot: (L. 2. cont. Parm. & L. 3. de Bapt. c. 1.) *Let them explicate,* says he, *how the Sacrament of the Baptized cannot be lost, and the Sacrament of one Ordained can: For if both of them are Sacraments, of which no body doubts, says he, why cannot that be lost, if this may be?* Here you see he calls Orders a Sacrament: He shews it to be a proper and true one, by comparing it with Baptism; he assures us that no one doubted the Truth of it: And if St. Augustine may be credited, not only all the Writers of his Time, but also all the Faithful did believe the same.

Now as to the Effects of this Sacrament: The proper and peculiar Effect, is to give Grace to exercise worthily the Ecclesiastical Functions; by which a Man is qualified for the due Discharge of his Duty, and for the administering of the Sacraments, even as by the Grace of Baptism every one is made fit to receive the other Sacraments. There is also besides Grace another Effect, which is called a *Character*, that is to say, a kind of spiritual Mark, or Seal in the Soul, which always remains in it; and this is conferred by Baptism, Confirmation, and Order, of which St. Paul seems to speak in his second Epistle to the Corinthians (Ch. i. v. 22.) where he says, that *God has sealed us.* So that he who has once had the Honour of being made Priest, can never be so degraded

ded as to lose his Character and become a Layman again.

From what has been already said, you may easily see, that the Authority and Power of the Evangelical Priesthood far excels that of the Law of Nature, or the Levitical Priesthood; for the Evangelical Priesthood is derived from *Christ* our Lord, who was a Priest according to the Order of *Melchizedech*; and *Christ* having in himself the supreme Power of giving Grace, and forgiving Sins, has left this Power to his Church, not boundless, as he himself had it, but limited to the Use of the Sacraments. This Power, not only of remitting Sin, but also of consecrating and offering the true and real Body and Blood of our Lord, so far excels all human Reason and Understanding, that there is nothing in this World which can be compared to it: And this is what we call the Power of Order. But besides, they have also a Power of Jurisdiction over the mystical Body of *Christ*; for the Government of the Faithful, to direct and lead them to eternal Happiness. Our Saviour was sent by his eternal Father, and the Apostles were sent by Him: *As my Father sent me, so I send you* (Joh. xxi. 21.) said *Christ* to his Apostles; whereby he gave them his Power, and established that ecclesiastical Authority which was by Succession to continue always in his Ministers, even to the End of the World (Matt. xxviii. 20.) *For this Cause*, says St. Paul to *Titus*, *did I leave thee in Crete, that thou shouldst correct the Things that are wanting, and establish Priests in the Cities, as I also appointed thee* (Tit. i. 5.) Thus without Interruption, from Age to Age, has the Power and Authority which *Christ* committed to his Church, been transmitted through succeeding Generations; thus have been, and are continued Priests, to administer lawfully God's Sacraments to the Faithful, and to govern them in what appertains to God and their Souls, to offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins, &c. And therefore, as for the People, so also



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*for themselves ought they to offer for Sins* (Heb. v. 1.) Thus comes it, that *we have an Altar whereof they have no Power to eat who serve the Tabernacle* (Heb. xiii. 10.) Thus we have a *Priesthood* not derived from the Law of *Moses*, but from *Christ* our Lord; who came to abolish the old Law, the old Sacrifices, and give us the new Law, the Law of Grace and not of Servitude; and so vouchsafed to institute in his Church a new Priesthood, a new Sacrifice of his Body and Blood; which only such Priests have Power to offer, as are ordained according to the Rites of the Catholic Church; which visible Sacrifice, as the reformed Ministers reject both in and by their Ordination and Practice, they should quit all Claim to the Priesthood instituted by *Christ*: For the proper Office of Priests is to offer Sacrifice, so that there can be no Priests where there is no Power to offer Sacrifice.

Nor must any one take this Honour to himself, but only he who is called by God (Heb. v. 4.) And he is said to be called of God, who is called by the lawful Ministers of God's Church. The Church examines first the Purity of their Intention, and the Sufficiency of their Virtue and Learning, before she chooses them: And then she consecrates them with all the Solemnity of those Religious Rites, which are called the Sacrament of Order, or sacred Ordination. And since Priesthood is so holy, and the Ministry or Function so divine, therefore that the Exercise of it might be performed more worthily, and with greater Veneration, it was convenient that in the regular Disposition of the Church, there should be many different Orders of Ministers, distributed in such a Manner, that all who by the clerical Tonsure are marked for this Design, might ascend by these lesser Orders, *viz.* of *Porter* or *Door-keeper*, *Lector* or *Reader*, *Exorcist* and *Acolyth*. From these minor Orders they are promoted to the greater; as that of *Sub-deacon*, which is the first of those that are called Holy; then of *Deacon*, and lastly of *Priest*. The Holy

Scriptures not only make express mention of Priests, but also of Deacons, (1 Tim. iii. 13.) and though it makes no mention of the Order of Sub-deacons, nor of any of the four lesser Orders, yet from the first beginning of the Church their Names were known to be in Use, though not in equal Rank; the Sub-deacon is reckoned among the great Orders, by the Fathers and Holy Councils; in which we also read frequently of the lesser.

The first Order is *Porter* or *Door-keeper*, whose Office is to keep the Keys of the Church, Sacristsy, and Treasury. (Of this Order see Conc. Tolet. C. 6. & Trid. Sess. 23. de Reform. & S. Isid. L. de Eccl. C. 14 & Baron. Annal. Eccl. An. 34. N. 287.)

The second is *Lector* or *Reader*, whose Office is to recite aloud the Lessons in the divine Office, and formerly to instruct the Faithful in the first Rudiments of the Christian Religion. (Of this Order see S. Cypr. Epist. 33. & Tertul. de Præscript. C. 61. & Baron. Annal. Eccl. Anno 34. N. 287.)

The third is that of *Exorcist*, whose Function is to read the Exorcisms and Prayers of the Church over those who are possessed with unclean Spirits. Of this Order see the Authors above cited.

The fourth Degree is that of *Acolyte*, and is the last of those who are called Lesser; whose Office is to serve at Mass, light the Candles in the Church, prepare the Wine and Water, and attend the greater Ministers in the Time of Sacrifice, (Of this Order see S. Cypr. Epist. 55. & Baron. Annal. Eccl. An. 78. N. 80.) All these lesser Orders are conferred by receiving from the Bishop the Instruments or Books belonging to their respective Offices, and by solemn Prayer prescribed in the Pontifical.

The first of the three greater, which are called Holy or Sacred, is the Order of *Sub-deacon*, whose Office is to serve the Deacon at the Altar; he prepares the Linen, the Chalice and Patten, the Bread  
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and Wine; he reads the Epistle, and gives Water to the Bishop or Priest when they wash their Hands for the Sacrifice. The Bishop, before he ordains him, declares, that none are to be received into this Order, who do not resolve to receive and observe the Law of perpetual Continency: He is also obliged to the Canonical Hours of the Church Office.

The second is the Order of *Deacon*, which is conferred upon him by the Imposition of the Bishop's Hands, and by delivering to him the Book of the Gospels. His Office is to assist the Bishop or Priest in the Sacrifice of the Mass; and in the Absence of the Priest he may explain the Gospel, and baptize, &c.

The third and highest of all sacred Orders is that of Priest, whose Office is chiefly to offer up to God the Sacrifice of the Mass, for the Living and the Dead, and to administer all the Sacraments except Confirmation and Holy Orders; and also to remit Sins, and to assist the Bishop in governing and preaching by Commission from him. These are the proper Functions of the Priestly Order, which though it be only one, yet it has different Degrees of Dignity and Power: First the Priests, secondly the Bishops, and thirdly the Pope.

From hence we may gather what Honour, Reverence and Obedience, is due to the Bishops and Priests of the Church. For as they are ordained by God to be the Judges over his People in such Things as appertain to the Salvation of their Souls, and also to be their Governors and Rulers in all that regards Religion, and likewise to be their ghostly and spiritual Fathers: And seeing at the same Time how much Almighty God has honoured them, in giving them a Dignity and Power in their Consecration above all other Creatures; a Power, I say, even over the Natural Body of *Christ*, to consecrate, offer, and distribute it to the Faithful; and a Power over

his Mystical Body the Church, to remit or retain Sins, to administer the Sacraments, and do the sacred Function of the Character imprinted in them : A Power so much more excellent, eminent and higher than other Dignities, as the Spirit surpasses the Body, and Heaven the Earth. St. Paul says, (Heb. vii. 7.) that it is certain that he who has a Right to give his Benediction to another, is more noble and higher than he to whom the Benediction is given. Now Priests give their Benediction to Princes, Kings, and Emperors ; their Dignity therefore, considered in its spiritual Capacity, is greater. 'Tis therefore a Precept incumbent upon all the Faithful, both Men and Women, of what State and Condition soever, to love, reverence, and obey the Ministers or Priests, of God's Church, in such a Manner, as the Nature and Dignity of their Office require ; for St. Paul says, (1. Tim. v. 17.) that those who execute the Office of Priests, and govern the People are worthy of double Honour. And again, in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians* (C. v. 12.) he teaches us saying, *We beseech you, Brethren, to know those who labour among you, and who preside over you in the Lord, that you esteem them more abundantly in Charity for their Work.* By this Exhortation of St. Paul every one may see what Honour and Respect we ought to have for the Ministers of God's Church, and that not merely upon Account of their Virtue or Learning, which alone is sufficient to make any Man be esteemed and valued ; but we ought to love them, and respect them chiefly upon Account of their Character and Labour, as being the instrumental Cause of our spiritual Life ; for by them we are made Christians, and received into the Church : By them we are delivered from our Sins, and reinstated into the Grace and Favour of Almighty God : By them we receive his Blessings, and are nourished and fed, not only with the spiritual Food of God's Word, but also with the heavenly Food of *Christ's* most precious Body and Blood  
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in the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist: And by them we offer to God the dreadful Sacrifice: In fine, by them the Sacraments are administer'd, and the empyreal Heaven is opened to us. We ought therefore to have them in Reverence (according to the Admonition of St. Paul) *as the Ministers of Christ, and the Dispensers of the Mysteries of God*, (1 Cor. iv. 1.) Remembering that he who heareth and obeyeth them, heareth and obeyeth God; and he who disobeyeth them, disobeyeth God; (Luc. x.) for the Love and Reverence which is given to God's Ministers is given to God, and the Contempt of them is the Contempt of God: This is what God himself declared to *Samuel* (whom the People of *Israel* refused to have to rule over them) in these Words, *They have not only contemned and rejected thee, but me also* (1 Reg. viii.) So that generally the Honour or Contempt which is shewed towards God's Ministers redounds to God himself; as appears by the Punishment of the Contempt which the *Jews* shewed to *Moses* (1. Num. xii.) which Almighty God looked upon as done to himself. We must not therefore neglect and despise them who are the Judges of the Consciences even of Kings; them whom the Prophet *Malachy* call the *Angels of our Lord*, (Mal. ii. 7.) them who are the Judges of God's People, Embassadors of his Divine Majesty, Mediators between God and Men. We respect Embassadors, even those of barbarous and infidel Kings; with how much more Reason then should we respect those whom the King of Kings doth send to us?

Again, besides the Love, Reverence and Respect, which we owe to the Bishops and Priests of God's Church, we must also be obedient to them, in all that appertains to our eternal Salvation and the Government of the Church: For to them our Blessed Saviour has committed the Keys of his Kingdom; by which they have a Power and Jurisdiction over all Christians, for the Conservation and Encrease of Virtue, and Good of the Church; since St. *Paul* ex-

horts all Men to be obedient to their spiritual Rulers; *Obeſy your Prelates,* ſays he, *and be ſubject to them, for they watch over you, as being to render an Account of your Souls* (Rom. xv. 27.)

Befides, we muſt not only honour them, love them, and obey them, but we muſt alſo ſuccour and relieve them in their corporal Neceſſities, and that with a free Heart and good Will; for as St. Paul ſays, *Who doth ſerve as a Soldier at his own Expence? or who feeds a Flock, and eats not of the Milk of the Flock?* (1 Cor. ix. 7.) And again in another Place he ſays, *They who adminiſter to the People ſpiritual Things, ought likewise to receive of the People corporal Things* (Rom xv. 17.)

Is it not aſtoniſhing to ſee the different Behaviour of Chriſtians now-a-days, to the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, to what it was formely? In former Ages we read of Princes, Kings, and Emperors, falling down at their Feet, with the moſt profound Reverence and Reſpect. We read that St. *Francis* had to great a Reſpect for Priests (See Bonav. in ejus Vit.) that he was uſed to ſay, That if he ſhould meet an Angel and a Priest together, he would honour the Priest in Preference to the Angel. We read alſo that St *Antony*, the great Patriarch of ſo many thouſand Hermits, had ſuch a Veneration and Reſpect for Priests, that if he met one he fell upon his Knees, and roſe not up till he had received his Benediction. We alſo read that the Emperor *Constantine* the Great had ſo great a Reſpect for Biſhops and Priests, that he would not ſit down in the Council of *Nice*, till after all the Biſhops, and even then only upon a Seat below them all, and with their Approbation.

Behold, dear Chriſtians, how much the Biſhops and Priests were reſpected in thoſe Days; but now, alas! Things are come to that Paſs, that they are flighted and contemned, and looked upon as little better than menial Servants; nay, they are frequently made the Sport and Ridicule of the Company, and their

their Conduct upon all Occasions censured; and what is still worse, if they hear of any of their Failings and Imperfections, they are sure to publish them; whereas we ought to imitate the Example of *Constantine* the Great, who as *Theodoret* relates, when he was present in the Council of *Nice*, many Libels were brought to him, fill'd with the ill Behaviour and Vices of some Priests; he would not read them, but commanded them to be publickly burnt, saying, that it was a wicked Thing to publish the Vices of those whom God has constituted to be our Judges and Rulers: It is also related of him, that he should say, That if he saw a Priest commit the Sin of Adultery, he would cover him with his Cloak, for fear any one should see him. This Sentiment of his is conformable to that of *St. Hierom*, who thus writes, 'Far be it from us, says he, that we ever speak amiss of those who succeed in the Ministry of *Christ*.'

To conclude: Consider well on what I have here said, concerning the exalted Dignity of Priesthood, and your Duty to them; which I speak not for their Glory or Honour; no, nothing less; for their exalted State ought to be a Motive of Humiliation to them, knowing their own Unworthiness, and the great Charge they have upon their Hands, and the strict Account they must one Day give of their Ministry: I say, I speak not this for their Honour, but for your Advantage; to the End that you may never be so unfortunate as to fall under the heavy Displeasure of Almighty God, by your Disobedience and irreverent Behaviour to his Ministers; and that you may obtain his Blessing, like obedient and dutiful Children, whom he will at the last Day reward with the Fruition of his Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.

## D I S C. I.

*On the Sacrament of MATRIMONY.**Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled.*

Heb. xiii. 4.

**Y**OU must not, dear Christians, imagine from these Words of St. Paul, that Marriage is honourable amongst all Sorts of Men, as our Adversaries would have it; for if so, the Marriage of a Brother with a Sister would be honourable: And that of those who have vowed Continence, to whom the same Apostle says 'tis *damnable* (1 Tim. v.) So that the true Meaning of the Apostle is, That Marriage is honourable *in all Things*; that is, in all its Parts and Circumstances. 'Tis honourable in the *Intention*, when the Intention is right, and according to the true End of Marriage: 'Tis honourable in the *Celebration* of it; and, in fine, 'tis honourable in the *Effects*.

Of this great Sacrament five Things seem to me proper to be explained. 1<sup>st</sup>, What Matrimony is, and by whom it was instituted. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Whether it be a Sacrament and causes Grace. 3<sup>dly</sup>, What are the Effects of it. 4<sup>thly</sup>, What are the Obligations and Dispositions of those who are about to enter upon the State of Matrimony. And lastly, What are the Obligations of those who are already married. These shall make up the Subject of this Discourse.

Marriage is a Contract actually made by mutual Consent, of one Man and one Woman; that is, between two lawful Persons, who give and take one another for Husband and Wife, till Death parts them.



It was first instituted by God himself between our first Parents *Adam* and *Eve* in the earthly Paradise, and had God's Blessing upon it, as the only approved Means for the lawful Propagation of Mankind; this we find in the first Chapter of *Genesis* (Verse 28.) where we read that *God blessed them*, and said, *Increase and multiply*. This Institution was afterwards confirmed by our Saviour *Christ*, as we read in the 19th Chapter of *St. Matthew* (Verse 6.) where *Christ* says, *What God hath joined together let no Man put asunder*. And then it was our blessed Saviour raised it to a new Dignity, by making it a Sacrament of the new Law, and so to give Grace to those who worthily receive it.

But this is what our Adversaries will not allow, for they deny that Matrimony is a Sacrament, tho' *St. Paul* expressly calls it so, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians* (C. v. 32.) where speaking of Matrimony, he says, *There shall be two in one Flesh: This is a great Sacrament*, or *Mystery* as the Protestants translate it; which Words are (according to what the Church and Fathers teach) to be understood of a Sacrament, properly speaking. Thus *Tertullian*, *St. Augustin*, and *St. Ambrose*, understood them (*Tertul. L. de Monog. S. Aug. de Nup. & Concup. C. 10. & 12. S. Ambr. in Epist. ad Eph.*) Now it is certain, that all the Sacraments of the new Law confer Grace. Again, the Words following, *but I say in Christ, and his Church*, do signify that Matrimony represents the Union of *Christ* with his Church, which Union consists in Grace and Charity; so that it evidently shews, that there is Grace and mutual Charity conferred upon the married Couple, towards each other; whereby Matrimony is truly a Sign or mysterious Representation of the indissoluble Union of *Christ* and his Church.

Besides, it has always been looked upon and acknowledged as a Sacrament in the Catholick Church:

and has all the Requisites of a Sacrament. The outward Sign are the Words or Tokens, expressing the mutual Consent of the Parties: The inward Grace is the holy Union of their Hearts in perfect Love. For it cannot be imagined, that *Christ* would confine Marriage to one Person, as he does, (Matth. xix. 6.) and that for Life, without such an Allowance of Grace as might make the Burden supportable. This Doctrine has always been believed, and taught by the Fathers and Councils of the Church.

St. *Irenæus* (L. 1. C. 1.) who lived above fifteen hundred Years ago, calls Matrimony a Sacrament. By all Means, says he, they ought to meditate on the Sacrament of Marriage.

St. *Cyril* (C. 2. in Joan. 22.) who lived upwards of fourteen hundred Years ago, teaches, 'That *Christ* sanctified Wedlock, and gave Grace to Marriage.'

St. *Ambrose* (In C. 5. ad Ephes. ver. 32. & L. 1. de Abrah. C. 7.) who lived above thirteen hundred Years ago, says, 'That there is a great Sacrament, or Mystery, in the Unity of Man and Wife.'

St. *Augustin*, (Tract. 9. in Joan.) who lived above thirteen hundred Years since, says, 'That which in Christ and the Church is a great Sacrament, this in all Husbands and Wives is an inseparable Sacrament of Conjunction.' And again, (L. de Fide & Operibus, C. 7.) 'In the Church, says he, not only the Bond, but also the Sacrament of Marriage is commended.' And in another Place (L. de Bono Conjugii, C. 18.), "In the Marriage of our Women, says he, the Sanctity of the Sacrament is more worthy than the Fruitfulness of the Womb.

The Council of *Florence* (which was held in the Year of our Lord 1438) defines, that there are seven Sacraments, all which give Grace to the worthy Receivers (See Litera Unionis in Decret. Eugen.) And that the seventh Sacrament is that of Matrimony, which is a Sign of the Union of *Christ* and his Church, according

according to that of the Apostle; *This is a great Sacrament, but I say in Christ and his Church.*

The Council of *Trent* also declares Matrimony to be a Sacrament, and that it gives Grace to the worthy Receivers, (Sess. 24. Can. 1.)

Let us now see what are the Effects of this Sacrament. *1st*, It gives Grace to the married Couple mutually to love one another. *2dly*, To bear with one another's Weakness, and to live in Christian Peace together. *3dly*, To restrain the Violence of Concupiscence, and to be loyal and faithful to each other. *4thly*, To support more easily, with Christian Courage, the Difficulties and Burdens of a Marriage State. *5thly*, To conduct well their Family, and breed up their Children in the Love and Fear of God. *Lastly*, It confirms their inseparable Union, and gives an Encrease of sanctifying Grace.

But perhaps it may be asked, If the Sacrament has so many happy Effects, how comes it then that we find so few of them appear in the greater Part of Marriages? My Answer is, Because very few come with the due Dispositions and Preparations as they ought, to receive this Sacrament: They consult not God in their Choice, but only their own Lust and temporal Interest; they prepare not themselves for it, by putting themselves in the State of Grace; and too often by their sinful Lives and brutal Sensuality, they lose the Grace of God, and so frustrate the Effects of this Sacrament: and therefore are justly punished with the quite contrary unhappy Effects, of Impatience, Quarrelling, Hatred and Jealousy.

Now as to the Obligations of such as are about to be married, or who are likely to settle in that State: You must first observe, that every one before he engages himself in any State, Calling, or Profession, ought first of all seriously to consult Almighty God. *2dly*, He ought to advise with such Persons as he has Reason to judge are ca-

pable of giving him good Counsel, according to the Admonition of *Ecclesiasticus*: *My Son*, (Ch. xxxii. 24.) says he, *do nothing without Advice, and by this Means you will not repent afterwards.* Every one ought by fervent Prayer to recommend himself, his Actions, and his Designs to Almighty God, that he may obtain a Blessing from Heaven upon his Undertakings. But if this ought to be our constant Method of proceeding, before we undertake any thing of Moment; 'tis chiefly necessary for all those who engage themselves in a State of Life, which of itself is unchangeable, such as Marriage is. For in such a Case, it is not in their Power to undo what they have once done. The Knot being once tied, nothing but Death can dissolve it; and therefore they cannot be too cautious in their Choice, when it is evident that both their temporal Happiness in this Life, and their eternal Happiness in the next, does in a great Measure depend upon it.

When therefore any one begins to think of marrying, and that there are any Proposals, or Advances offer'd towards it, let every one imitate the Example of the Patriarch *Isaac*, of whom we read in *Genesis*, (Ch. xxiv. 63) that when his Father *Abraham* had sent his Servant to treat about his Marriage with *Rebecca*, he went out into the Fields to pray: He did not think it enough, that he had a prudent, wise, and virtuous Father, who would take all possible Care to choose a good Wife for him; but withal he judged it absolutely necessary to apply himself to Almighty God, by Prayer and Meditation, to beg that Almighty God would order and dispose of him, as he knew it most convenient for his Honour and Glory, and for his private Good.

The first thing therefore to be done, is to recommend an Undertaking of this Nature to God  
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by Prayer; they ought to follow the Example of those who were married in *Canaan*; they invited our Saviour, his blessed Mother, and Disciples to the Marriage; they must therefore invite our Saviour to the Marriage; that is, they must beg of him to give a Blessing to their Marriage; they must beg the Intercession of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, the Apostles, and all the Saints, that if they marry, it may be, not to be miserable here, and perhaps hereafter, but that it may be for their temporal and eternal Good.

Next, they who are about to engage in a married Life, if they have Parents alive, they are to have a Regard to their Will and Directions; as they are commanded to honour and obey their Parents in all that is not sinful, they are not to dispose of themselves in Marriage without their Consent and Approbation. 'Tis true, I must not deny but that there may be some Exceptions in this, when their Parents are certainly unreasonable; and when it is evident they are bias'd by some private Interest or Ends; so that in hindering or promoting the Marriage of their Children, they give them Advice which is no ways for their Good. But if any such thing should happen, as it may sometimes, particularly when Parents are of a different Religion from their Children; yet even in such Cases, they ought to consult, and follow the Counsel and Advice of such discreet Persons, as they can confide in: For they ought to be careful in a Concern of so great Importance, not to be led by their own Passion, Inclination, and Fancy.

Alas! dear Christians, this is very often the Case of such as marry; for instead of consulting God, their Parents, and their Directors, they are guided by Love, Passion, Inclination, and Fancy. All these are blind Guides; and if the Blind lead the

the Blind, what Wonder, as the Scripture says, if they fall into the Ditch? 'Tis no Wonder at all, if by such Engagements, and by such Marriages, they make their Lives miserable; and what is chiefly to be deplored, by such inconsiderate Proceedings, involve themselves in such Inconveniencies, as make them eternally miserable in the next Life. 'Tis no Wonder, I say, that they who marry upon such Motives, live in continual Dissensions, Jealousies, and what not? 'Tis particularly true of such Marriages, what St. *Paul* says, they shall have the Tribulation of the Flesh, they shall have neither Peace of Mind, nor Quietness in their Families; continual Crosses, Tribulations, and Misery, is their everlasting Lot.

Again, such as engage in a married Life must take care to marry with a good Intention. The chief End of Marriage, is to have Children, and when they have them, to breed them up in the Love and Fear of God. We have an excellent Instruction relating to this in the Book of *Toby* (Ch. vi.) who may justly be proposed as an Example to all married Persons. We there read, that *Sarah* the Daughter of *Raguel* was married successively to seven Husbands, and every one of them, the first Night of their Marriage, died: Notwithstanding this, the Angel who accompanied young *Toby*, in the Shape of a Man, and conducted him to the House of *Raguel*, advised him to marry this same Woman; young *Toby* replied, I have heard, says he, that this young Woman has been married to seven Husbands, and every one of them have been found dead the first Night of their Marriage, and killed by the Devil: 'Tis true, says the Angel, yet you need not fear upon that Account; for I will shew you, says the Angel, why this happened, and who they are, over whom the Devil has had such Power: They are Men, who marry in such a Manner that God is far from their Minds; they follow

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follow the Suggestions of their Lusts and their Passions, like Horse and Mule, who have no Understanding, and over such the Devil has a Power. But for your Part, says the Angel, when you marry, you shall take your Wife in the Fear of God, with a Desire of Children, and not through Lust and Passion. He did so, and was happy in his Marriage. Those seven, before him, who had married to satisfy their Lust, and irregular Inclinations, were by God's Permission killed by the Devil; but as to *Toby*, who married with the Fear of God, and with a good Intention, the Devil had no Power over him.

You'll perhaps ask me, if it be not lawful to marry in Consideration of Riches, Beauty, Quality, or some other Conveniences relating to the present Life? My Answer is, that none of these ought to be the only, nor the chief Motive in Marriage; the End of which is to have Posterity, if it be the Will of Almighty God: But these are not to be condemned when they are only secondary Reasons and Motives for preferring one Person who has them, before another who wants them. But Virtue and good Humour are doubtless the best and most lasting Qualifications, which they who marry ought to have in View.

There are besides these, which I have already touched upon, some other Instructions necessary for those who are about to marry. They should be very careful what Promises they make to one another. I would not have Persons to make any Promise at all of marrying before-hand: for there are often very great Inconveniences which happen from such Promises, because Promises once made are to be kept, unless some very considerable Changes happen: And many Times Persons repent themselves of Promises rashly made, which they know not how to be freed from, and yet are very unwilling to perform

perform, which makes their Life and Condition very uneasy afterwards.

And again, Promises and Contracts relating to Marriage, are very different. A Promise, properly speaking, is when the Parties oblige themselves to marry hereafter, by using such Words and Expressions as signify that they will hereafter marry, &c. But sometimes the Parties are either so rash, or so ignorant, that they use the very Words of Marriage, or some Expressions equivalent, which signify that they take one another at present, and from this Time afterwards. A Contract made in this Manner is no less than a clandestine Marriage, where the Discipline of the Council of *Trent* is not received, as it is not in our Kingdom; and then the Contract is so binding, that no Power upon Earth can dissolve it. 'Tis notwithstanding a very unlawful, and sinful Way of contracting, and such clandestine Marriages are always condemned, as considerable Transgressions; every one therefore ought by all Means to avoid, and abhor such kind of private Contracts.

They ought also to be very careful in the Time of Courtship, not to admit of any kind of Liberties, or Familiarities, which, alas! are too common among some sort of People; and which Persons of a better Education would be altogether ashamed of; they ought to be as much ashamed to permit them, as I am to speak of them: Their Courtship is something like that of dumb Creatures, they are rude in their Actions, because they know no better Way of expressing their Love and Kindness: But they ought to reflect, that as long as they are not married, what Design or Resolution soever they have of marrying, they are not to use any kind of Familiarities, which they may not as lawfully do, or admit of in any other Person whom they never intend to marry; and any Action which is of itself against Modesty is always



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always an Offence against the infinite Majesty of God, to whom they must one Day give an Account.

In fine, to put an End to what belongs to this Point; when Persons are resolved to marry, and come to celebrate their Marriage, they must use all Means to be in the State of Grace: And therefore before Marriage they are to confess the Sins they find themselves guilty of, that they may put no Impediment to the Grace of God which is given in this Sacrament. But now as to the Duties and Obligations of those who are already married.

The first is, towards Almighty God; that is, they must take a particular Care, that neither the Solitude, nor the Love which they bear to one another, do any Ways diminish their Love towards Almighty God; this is what too often happens, and what St. Paul admonished the *Corinthians* of in his first Epistle, *I would have you*, says he, (Ch. vii. 32.) *be free from Solitude*. Not but that they are to be commended for taking care of their temporal Concerns, and 'tis what they are obliged to do; but then they must remember the Admonition of our blessed Saviour, (Matth. vi. 33.) *Seek first the Kingdom of God*; which they do not comply with, unless they love God above all Things, with their whole Hearts, &c.

The second Duty of Man and Wife, is to love one another, to be an Assistance and Comfort to each other, in all Occurrences of Life, in Adversity, as well as in Prosperity; to keep an inviolable Fidelity to each other, and to make it always their Endeavour to bear patiently with the Infirmities, Passions, and disagreeable Tempers of each other; 'tis what St. Paul tells the *Galatians*, (Ch. vi. 2.) *to bear the Burthen of each other*. This Disposition of bearing patiently with each other, and with the Vexations and Troubles that happen in a married State, is absolutely necessary to preserve that Peace, Union, and Concord, which ought to be in all Families,

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The third Duty of Husband and Wife is, if God sends them any Children, to love them ; but then they must let their Love be discreet, and not to run into Extreams by excessive Fondness, in complying with them almost in every Thing they can wish or desire ; or by neglecting them, in letting every pettish Humour grow up with them, so that they will hardly ever be reclaimed. But the chief Care and Concern of Parents in regard of their Children, is to educate them well in the Knowledge of their Duty towards God, to fit them for Heaven more than for Earth.

But there is still another Obligation, which must crown a Parent's Care, and this is to give good Example to their Children ; this will prevent harsher Methods. Parents, let me exhort you not to think so much on the Difficulty of the Task, as on the eternal Reward it will procure both for you and your Children.

*The E N D.*



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